# IMF forecasts higher economic growth for RP in '04

Story on PAGE B1

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PHILIPPINE DAILY
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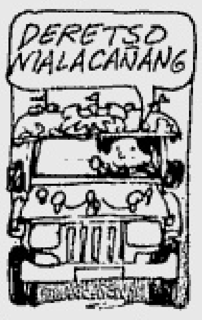
## 'Dyip ni Gloria'



By Juliet L. Javellana

LOOK who's riding the jeepney now. The symbol of Joseph Estrada's successful run for the presidency in 1998 may soon be associated with the woman who succeeded him in office.

Leaders of five big jeepney operators and drivers associations, claiming some 556,000 members nationwide, yesterday presented to President

DYIP/A10

**SANTA'S NUMBER**
A Santa Claus dances the "otso-otso," today's current dance craze, with band majorettes on the Malacañang grounds. The merrymakers were taking part in a traditional gift-giving event. REUTERS

# Do a Laurel, GMA ally urges Roco

By Armand Nocum and Dona Pazzibugan

AN OFFICIAL of the civil society group Konsensyang Pilipino yesterday asked presidential aspirant Raul Roco to be a statesman by sliding down to be President Macapagal-Arroyo's vice president for the May elections.

Teresita Baltazar, a Malacañang appointee, recalled how Salvador "Doy" Laurel heeded the advice of former Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin to be the running mate of Corazon Aquino in the snap presidential election called by President Ferdinand Marcos.

Baltazar, a commissioner at the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission, who was then actively supporting Aquino, noted that although Laurel had prepared to run for president and had built up a strong party, he agreed to run under Aquino, "sacrificing well-prepared plans and machinery" intended to catapult him to the highest post in the land.

But Roco said Konsensyang Pilipino got its analogy wrong.

"There is no comparison between GMA and Cory. GMA is the 'Marcos' here because she represents the establishment. She is not 'Cory.' She is not loved like Cory was loved. She is disliked.

"We are the insurgents," Roco said when reached by phone.

Sen. Aquilino Pimentel also had to

DO A LAUREL/A10

# 'No admission, no amnesty'

**RECOVERY WARD**
Col. Adrien Quidlat, a military doctor, talks with Galib Andang, aka Commander Robot of the Abu Sayyaf, at the V. Luna Medical Center in Quezon City. Robot, whose left leg was amputated, was captured by the Armed Forces in a gunbattle in Jolo on Dec. 7. The photo, released by the AFP yesterday, was taken on Dec. 17. AFP PHOTO

## *Barbers: Pardon only for those who confess*

By Christine O. Avendaño and Michael Lim Ubac

ONLY THOSE who will acknowledge the crimes of which they are accused and those who will declare "every penny" they stole from the national coffers should be qualified for the general amnesty planned by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

These suggestions, from Sen. Robert Barbers of the ruling Lakas-CMD and opposition Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr., respectively, were among the comments aired yesterday in the wake of the President's announcement Wednesday that she would grant general amnesty not only to Moro secessionists and communist rebels but also to "those involved in past political conflicts."

"They should first admit the crimes imputed to them before they qualify [for amnesty]," Barbers told reporters. He also said that a committee should be formed to set the criteria for qualification, and that its members should be of "known integrity."

Pimentel said Ms Macapagal should exercise extreme caution in extending amnesty to or allowing out-of court settlements with her political enemies.

"If there is going to be a compromise, all the hidden wealth should be reported first, and then a compromise can be arrived at on that basis. They should declare everything, every penny they took from the nation's coffers," he said.

He added that criminal liability could subsequently be "worked at."

Pimentel noted that the heirs of the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos had earlier offered to enter into a compromise agreement with the victims of human rights violations during martial law, using their $683-million Swiss account.

"But there could be more," said Pimentel, who was jailed four times during the Marcos dictatorship.

He said it was important that the people would not be shortchanged through Ms Macapagal's proposed general

NO ADMISSION/A10

# Debrah Lyn's pa won't be home for Christmas

By Norman Bordadora

SPARE a thought for Danny Mondragon.

A factory worker on a hunger strike in Saudi Arabia, Mondragon will likely miss the baptism of his 6-month-old daughter, a daughter he has not yet seen, on Sunday.

Mondragon is one of 16 overseas contract workers who left their places of work in the desert kingdom because their wages remained unpaid or because they were maltreated by their employers. Now the 16 are stranded in the capital city of Riyadh.

The workers, who formed the Kapatiran ng mga Migranteng Stranded sa Riyadh (or the brotherhood of migrants stranded in Riyadh), is now on its sixth day of a hunger strike in the Philippine Embassy. Their protest is meant to pressure the Philippine government into repatriating them in time for International Day of Migrants, which was yesterday.

Carrying the baby Debrah Lyn in her arms, Mondragon's wife told the INQUIRER: "We ask President Macapagal-Arroyo to help us. My husband no longer works in Jeddah because his employer didn't pay him for months." Mondragon's wife, Anna, was carrying a six-month-old daughter De-

DEBRAH/A11

# Health secretary warns of renewed SARS threat

HEALTH Secretary Manuel Dayrit yesterday sounded the alarm on the possible resurgence of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome in the country, but said the government was prepared to meet the threat.

Dayrit issued the warning after the World Health Organization confirmed on Wednesday that a military scientist in Taiwan had tested positive for SARS. He said the screening and monitoring of passengers from abroad has been heightened to prevent the transmission of the deadly virus.

According to Dayrit, the Department of Health has been strengthening health facilities for months and preparing SARS isolation rooms that would meet international standards.

He said the DOH has also pursued the training of its health workers to deal with not just SARS but all kinds of infectious diseases.

The San Lazaro Hospital, the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine and the Lung Center of the Philippines have been found to meet WHO standards for isolation rooms and health care for such cases, he said.

"The system is in place," Dayrit said. "We have never let our guard down ... We learn by experience, so it pays to listen to [the Taiwanese] now that they are under attack by SARS again."

SARS sickened thousands and claimed the lives of hundreds worldwide, including two Filipinos, middle of this year. The

HEALTH/A10

**PASSENGERS** on a Taipei flight pass through thermal scanner at the Naia, as a quarantine officer looks on. The airport is on renewed SARS alert because of a new case reported in Taiwan. ROGER MARGALLO

# 'Bulacan's modern day hero'

By Carmela Reyes
*PDI Central Luzon Desk*
and Jerome Aning

THE TITLE "Bulacan's modern-day hero" has been conferred on the late Foreign Secretary Blas Ople, who was earlier called by his former colleagues in the Senate a demigod, prophet, and an enigma.

The municipal council of Hagonoy gave Ople the honorific title in a resolution, which also declared today a non-working holiday in his hometown to give residents, friends and supporters the chance to pay their last respects to the man they called "Ka Blas" or "Amang."

Mayor Felix Ople, son of the late foreign secretary, thanked his colleagues in the local government for honoring his father.

Ople's remains were brought to Hagonoy yesterday from the Department of Foreign Affairs in Pasay City, where employees erupted into cheers of "Hip hip hooray!" and applause as the hearse carrying his remains left the building.

Gov. Josefina de la Cruz, Vice Gov. Aurelio Plamenco, other Bulacan officials and residents met the hearse at the Barangay Tabang toll gate in Guiguinto town and accompanied it to Hagonoy.

Black ribbons were hung along the roads on the electric posts leading to the National Shrine of St. Anne in Barangay Poblacion where a Mass for Ople was scheduled yesterday afternoon.

The remains will be transferred to the Ople residence in Barangay Sta. Monica and will stay there until Saturday morning.

Ople's remains will be taken to the

BULACAN'S/A11

# Clear skies over RP to wait another 5 years

SMOG over major Philippine cities may not start to clear for at least another five years after the government said on Wednesday it would delay the implementation of rules compelling industry and other sectors to switch to low-sulphur diesel.

The new Clean Air Act (CAA) has mandated a cut in the sulphur content of diesel products to 0.05 percent from 0.20 percent to reduce its harmful effects on the environment and human health.

Petron Corp. and Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. have started selling low-sulphur diesel in Manila to comply with the law.

But operators of small boats and owners of power plants, including state-run National Power Corp., were among those appealing for a delay, Energy Secretary Vincent Perez told a conference on air pollution.

Local companies, which get their diesel from various suppliers other than Petron and Pilipinas Shell, said having a uniform standard would force them to pass on the cost to customers, Perez said.

Other big consumers of diesel are manufacturers and exporters that use generators.

"Considering the clamor from indus-

CLEAR/A11

**WEATHER FORECAST**

FORECAST: Visayas and Mindanao including Palawan will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms becoming widespread rains over Central and Western Visayas and Northern Mindanao. The rest of Luzon will be partly cloudy.
SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/12/19/03

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Metro Manila** | Partly Cloudy | **Iloilo/Bacolod** | Cloudy with Rains |
| **Baguio** | Partly Cloudy | **Roxas** | Cloudy with Rains |
| **Tuguegarao** | Partly Cloudy | **Cebu** | Cloudy with Rains |
| **Laoag** | Partly Cloudy | **Tacloban** | Cloudy with Rains |
| **Clark Zone** | Partly Cloudy | **Gen. Santos** | Cloudy with Rains |
| **Tagaytay** | Partly Cloudy | **Zamboanga** | Cloudy with Rains |
| **Legazpi** | Partly Cloudy | **Cagayan de Oro** | Cloudy with Rains |
| **Calapan** | Partly Cloudy | **Davao** | Cloudy with Rains |

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# *Second* FRONTPAGE

# Germans may talk to Robot

**YOU CAN talk to him but you can't have him.**

**President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday said the Philippines will let German prosecutors interrogate Abu Sayyaf leader Galib Andang, but any request for his extradition was premature.**

Andang, a.k.a. Commander Robot, was captured in Indanan, Sulu, on Dec. 7, more than three years after allegedly leading an Abu Sayyaf raid on the Malaysian island of Sipadan to take a group of 21 European and Asian tourists hostage.

A court in Goettingen reportedly said this week it wanted Manila to extradite Robot so he could be tried for the abduction of the Wallert family, whose three members were among the group held for several months on Jolo.

"Commander Robot may be facing charges in Germany but he will face the music in the Philippines first," President Macapagal said in a written statement.

"We assure the German government Commander Robot will be secured and available for questioning by their probers, but talk about his extradition is premature.

"He will have to be prosecuted and tried by a Philippine court for the crimes he committed against our people," she added. "Philippine justice is ascendant and will be promulgated."

Andang, even if he were so inclined, would find it hard to escape after his left leg was amputated after it was shot up during his capture. Officials said he could face the death penalty if convicted.

The military had said Robot's capture was the result of good sleuthing by the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Today, the ISAFP officer who drew up the plan that resulted in the successful operation will receive an award at rites marking the 68th anniversary of the AFP.

Lt. Col. Aminkandra S. Undug, commander of Military Intelligence Group 9, will receive an Outstanding Achievement Medal from President Macapagal, the guest of honor at the Camp Aguinaldo rites.

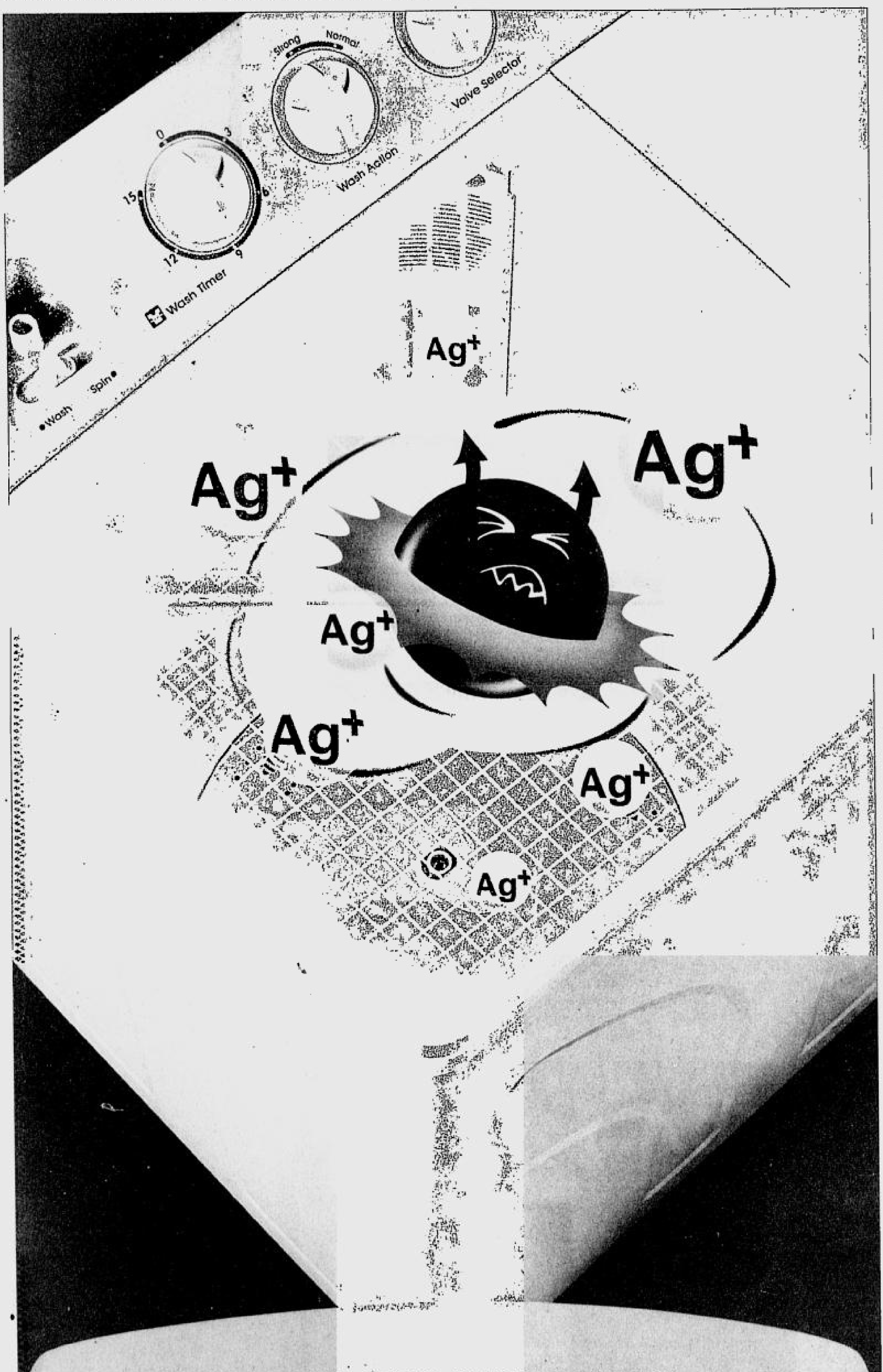
Undug, a member of Philippine Military Academy Class '82, was credited with conceptualizing "Oplan Robotic," which led to Andang's capture.

Other awardees include the Marine officer who was ground commander of the forces that quelled the July 27 Oakwood mutiny, and an Army captain, a classmate of the mutineers, who led an operation that captured a rebel camp.

Maj. Gen. Emmanuel Teodosio, Marine commandant who coordinated the military action against the mutineers, will be awarded the Philippine Legion of Honor medal.

Capt. Jonathan Obena, commanding officer of the Army's 57th Infantry Battalion, will receive the Distinguished Conduct Star, the second highest award after the Medal of Valor, for leading the operation that led to the capture of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front's Camp Omar in Datu Piang, Maguindanao in February 2000.

Commodore Amado Sanglay, commander of Naval Base Cavite, will receive the Distinguished Service Star, the third highest award, for foiling an attempt by the mutineers to loot the Naval Sea Systems Command armory, for initiating rehabilitation projects and assisting in the rescue of passengers of a plane that had crashed. *TJ Burgonio, AFP*



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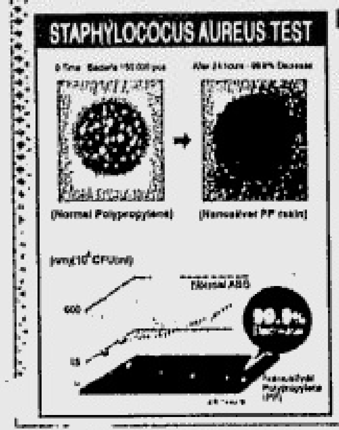

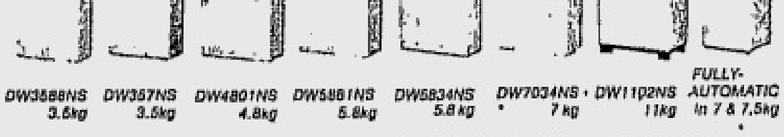

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# MILF to return captured soldiers

**By TJ Burgonio**

NO FRESH fighting was reported in Maguindanao between government troops and Moro Islamic Liberation Front rebels yesterday as members of a joint cease-fire committee traveled to the marshy interior of Datu Piang town for the hand over of four soldiers that were captured by the guerrillas.

But military officials said it would press ahead with pursuit operations against the Pentagon kidnap-for-ransom gang in MILF strongholds in the province even after agreeing to a truce that took effect last Wednesday.

Armed Forces vice chief Lt. Gen. Rodolfo Garcia said that MILF commanders and rebels would be pulled out of their positions in Datu Piang and placed in an "area of temporary stay" in the town to allow the military to pursue the kidnap gang.

He stressed that the rebels would be thoroughly screened to isolate Pentagon gang members who might try to join them.

"That way, they won't hamper the pursuit operations," he said.

Fighting had broken out between the government and the MILF in Maguindanao last Saturday and continued up to Monday after MILF guerrillas allegedly attacked government troops pursuing members of the Pentagon kidnap gang that abducted Filipino-Chinese car dealer Norman Sia.

The fighting left both sides with at least 13 dead and threatened to delay the resumption of peace talks scheduled for early January.

Late Tuesday, Garcia and Benjie Midtimbang, his MILF counterpart in the joint committee on the cessation of hostilities (CCCH), forged a truce that would involve the withdrawal of MILF forces from Datu Piang so the military could flush out the kidnappers.

But MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu said this was a "useless exercise."

"The kidnap gang is not in the area. If they were there, we would have captured or opened fire at them. The military just wants to sow chaos," he said.

Garcia said it was highly possible that the Pentagon gang commander Talio Tagum, who led the gang that abducted Sia, was still in the area.

Two days after the suspension of fighting yesterday, Garcia said the cease-fire was holding.

"There are no incidents today. The agreement by both sides to exercise restraint and not to launch offensive is holding," he said.

Yesterday, members of the CCCH traveled by *banca* through the marshes to Datu Piang for the handover of four soldiers—Pfc. Alex Eumag and Privates Neil Lagat, Arnel Dibauden and Wilfredo Castillano Jr.—captured by the rebels in the encounter in Gawang, Datu Saudi town on Monday.

Garcia said there would also be an exchange of wounded and dead, adding the handover was "a big step" in the peace process.

The time of the exchange depended on "how fast we can travel," noting that the venue of the handover was an hour away from Cotabato City.

The MILF did not ask for anything in exchange for handing over the captured soldiers.

"Our only demand is for the media to be present during the hand over so that the soldiers could express what they have experienced in our camps," Kabalu said in a phone interview.

The military complaint that the MILF attack on the troops pursuing the Pentagon gang last Monday was a violation of an existing cease-fire agreement would be the subject of future talks, said Garcia.

"What's important is that the cease-fire is holding, there is no fighting anymore. The armed confrontation should stop. The urgent task is to receive the soldiers and to have the wounded get some treatment," he said.

# *Typhoon FPJ to blow Ping away—Pimentel*

**By Michael Lim Ubac and Christine O. Avendaño**

OPPOSITION Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. yesterday warned Sen. Panfilo Lacson he would be "marginalized" in the ranks of the opposition should he persist in pursuing his presidential bid.

Pimentel said prominent opposition personalities and their supporters were solidly behind the standard-bearer of the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino, who happens to be actor Fernando Poe Jr.

"Since the typhoon called FPJ is coming, he (Lacson) should take shelter while the storm rages," Pimentel said.

Lacson the other day said he would still run for president even after Poe announced at a Club Filipino forum that he was not withdrawing from the race.

Lacson said he was left with no choice but to press on after it appeared Poe had reneged on a promise to go through a selection process.

To which Pimentel replied: "It's more of braggadocio than realistic."

Pimentel acknowledged that Poe, as a strong vote-getter, "comes with the force of a powerful typhoon if one were to use an analogy."

"Fernando Poe has the big drawing power that could unify the nation. But that unity could become ephemeral if it is not based on a solid platform," Pimentel said.

"Without a credible platform of government, an incoming president will have nothing to offer to the people, especially after his first 100 days in office, during which he traditionally enjoys a 'honeymoon' with the press," he said.

For his part, Lacson yesterday scored Sen. Edgardo Angara for insisting the newly formed Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino (KNP) was the true opposition.

In an interview over dzEC radio, Lacson said Angara spoke too soon when he said the KNP was the unified opposition, noting that the new coalition was not even recognized by the Commission on Elections as a political party.

The KNP is comprised of the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino, the Puwersa ng Masang Pilipino and PDP-Laban.

### ₱865B FOR 2004

# House OKs nat'l budget

**By Cynthia D. Balana**

THE HOUSE of Representatives late Wednesday passed on third and final reading the P864.8-billion proposed national budget for 2004, described as "anchored on continuity of reforms and fiscal discipline."

"This budget is in consonance with the three-pronged priorities of the Macapagal government: to provide for basic public services, eliminate graft and corruption and ensure peace and order," said Speaker Jose de Venecia.

He credited the efforts of the various parties in helping to beat the Dec. 18 Christmas adjournment to pass the measure.

The parties included the ruling Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats, the Nationalist People's Coalition now headed by Rep. Alfredo Maranon Jr., the Liberal Party led by Rep. Florencio Abad, the Nacionalista Party, Aksyon Demokratiko, and the opposition Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino.

## Objective

President Macapagal-Arroyo has said that the 2004 General Appropriations Act will be her administration's commitment to fiscal responsibility and discipline with the objective of gradually returning to a balanced budget position in the medium term.

The 2004 budget was 6.6 percent higher than the current outlay of P811.5 billion and it focuses resources on strategic areas that have multiplier effects on poverty alleviation and economy such as education, agriculture and agrarian reform, industry and tourism, fighting terrorism and lawlessness, and housing.

The top 10 departments that received the bulk of the budget were the Department of Education, P110.5 billion; Department of Public Works and Highways, P48.2 billion; Department of National Defense, P45.2 billion; Department of Interior and Local Government, P43.9 billion; Department of Agriculture, P15.3 billion; Department of Agrarian Reform, P14.8 billion; Department of Health, P10.4 billion; Department of Transportation and Communications, P9.7 billion; Judiciary, P7.8 billion and Department of Finance, P6.8 billion.

Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin, who submitted the proposed budget on Aug. 6, said the 2004 budget was aimed at reducing the budget deficit in the coming years through spending restraints and ensuring the generation of the required level of revenues.

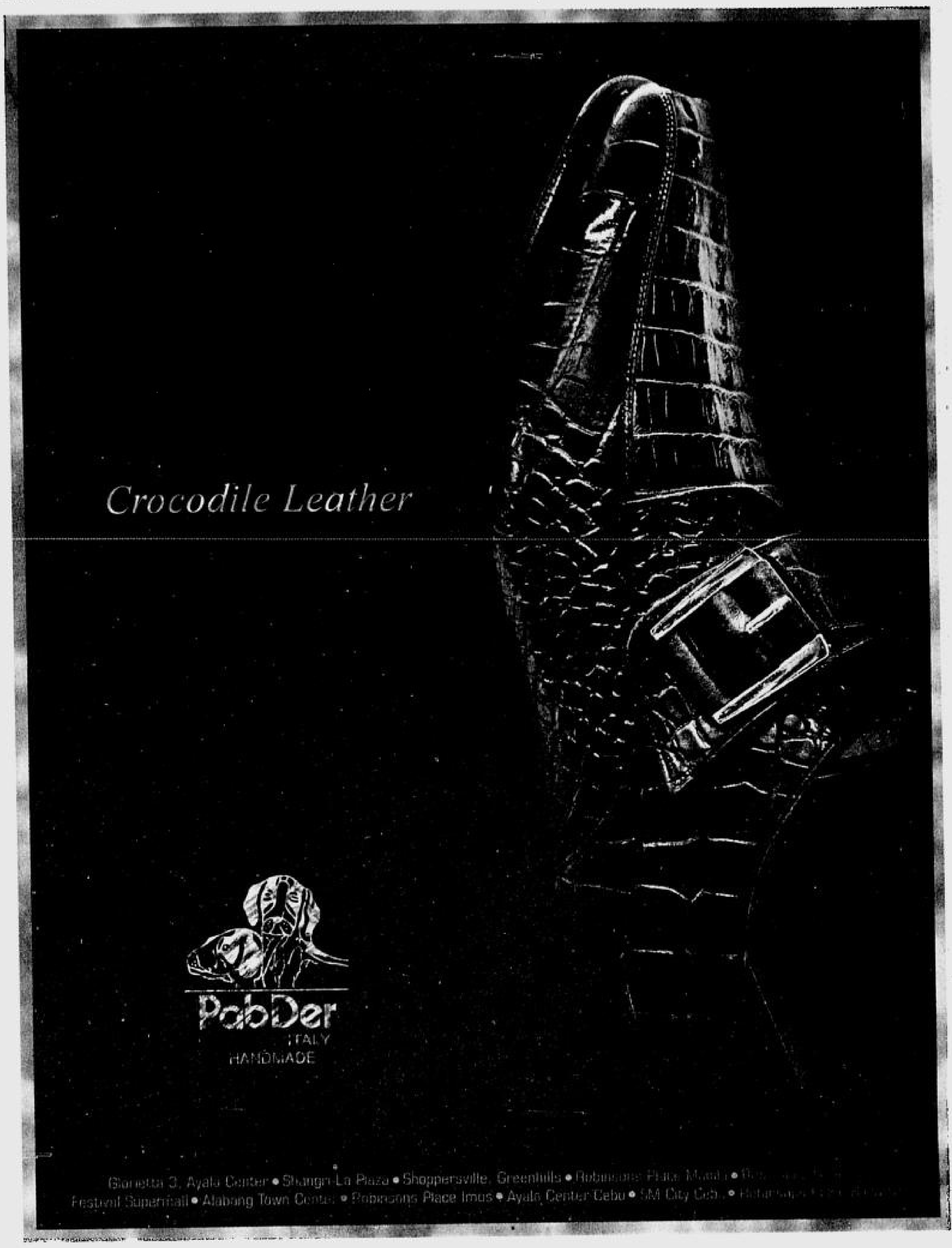
## Tax measures

The government intends to increase revenue base targets to P671.2 billion from this year's P584.1 billion by pushing for passage of critical revenue legislation.

The President urged Congress to pass the tax measures aimed at the indexation of the excise tax on sin products, the rationalization of the documentary stamp tax, and the creation of critical revenue legislation.

Also for 2004, a total of P52.9 billion will be spent for infrastructure, of which P30.5 billion, or 58 percent, will be spent for foreign-assisted projects.

Some P23.7 billion will be used for the construction, paving and improvement of 30,509 km of roads, and the construction, replacement and rehabilitation of 13,753 linear meters of bridges, including flyovers, interchanges and overpasses. This amount, according to Boncodin, also included some P1.3 billion for farm-to-market roads.



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# IMF urges higher taxes

**By Clarissa S. Batino**

THE INTERNATIONAL Monetary Fund is urging the cash-strapped government to impose higher taxes on beer, tobacco, fuel and text messaging, and warned that a plan to grant tax amnesty before elections would be inimical to the growing economy.

But the measures the IMF is proposing would also make President Macapagal-Arroyo unpopular in the crucial months before the May elections.

The Fund yesterday concluded its periodic review of the Philippine economy under a post-program monitoring arrangement started in 2001. The review should have wound up this month, but the Macapagal administration has extended it for another year.

In a briefing, the multi-lateral agency said it has decided to upgrade its forecast on the growth in the country's gross domestic product to 4.25 percent, from 4 percent in September.

IMF head of mission Masahiko Takeda, who is also senior adviser for the Asia-Pacific, said the government should remain vigilant on tax administration and spending if it wanted to sustain the fiscal discipline manifested this year.

"Consideration should be given to specific policy measures, such as raising and indexing excise taxes on alcohol, tobacco and petroleum products, in addition to other possible steps," the agency said in a statement.

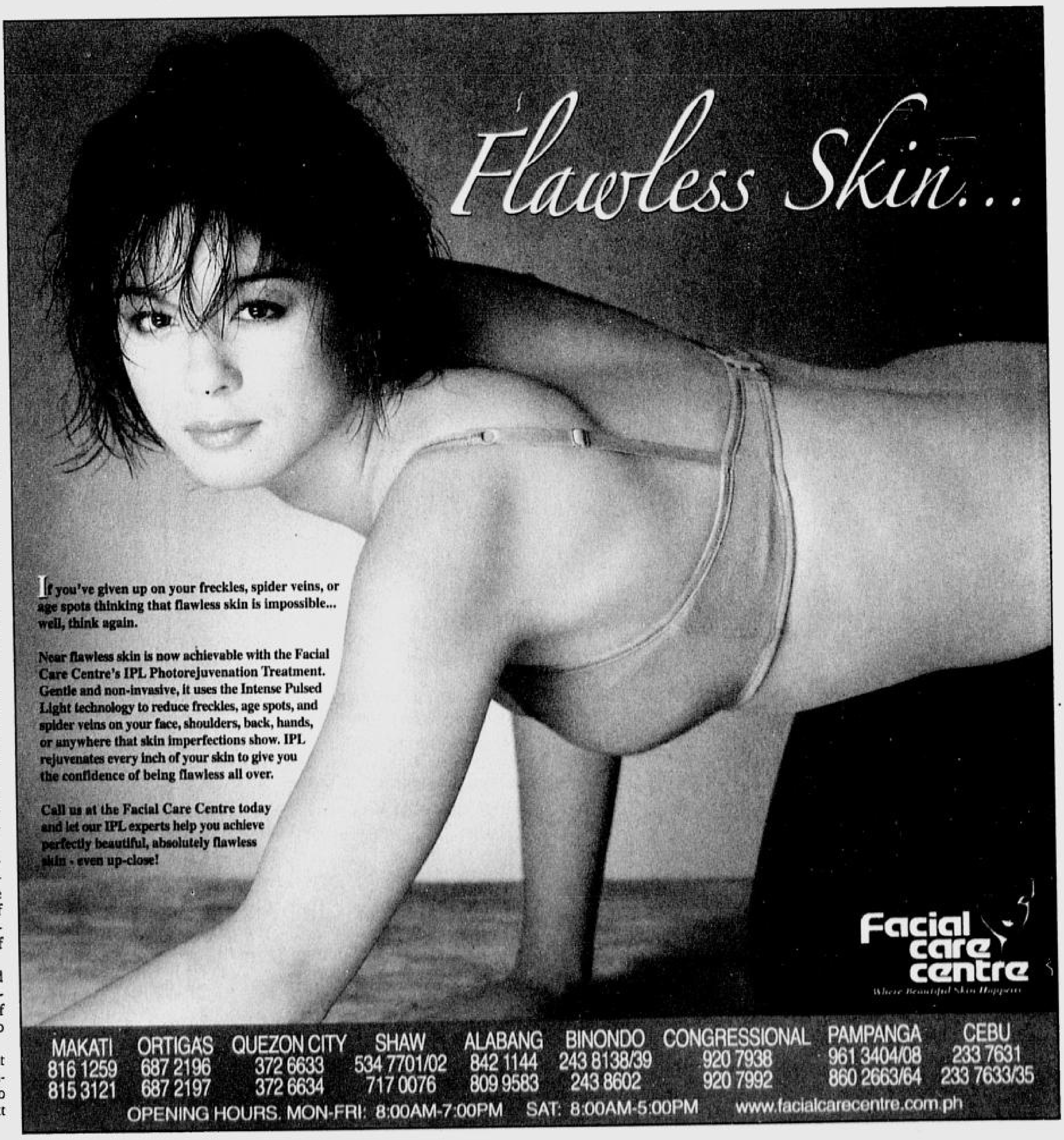
Takeda admitted that the IMF continued to press for new taxes on robust sectors of the economy, like telecommunications—text messaging in particular. He said earlier IMF proposals to raise the 10 percent value-added tax rate likewise remained on the table.

"It will also be important to resist proposals for new tax amnesties, given the harmful impact that repeated amnesties have on taxpayer compliance," the Fund stressed.

The IMF doubted that the projected P9.4-billion collection from the tax amnesty pending before Congress would materialize. The 10 amnesty laws passed during the time of Marcos yielded a collection of only P1.5 billion, and three amnesties during the time of Aquino, only P1.37 billion.

Takeda said the Fund foresaw continued volatility in the country because of the forthcoming elections, but cited the resiliency of the Philippine economy, which enabled it to withstand shocks.

Although confident that the government could confine the budget deficit to the P202-billion ceiling this year, the agency refused to say whether it was possible to achieve next year's target of P197.8 billion.



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# GMA blames politicians, not terrorists, for economic woes

POLITICIANS, not terrorists or kidnappers, are to blame for the continued erosion of investor confidence in the country, according to President Macapagal-Arroyo.

In a statement issued yesterday, the President said: "We alsoface some problems in economic confidence but these do not arise from the threat of terrorism or peace and order-related issues. We are winning the war against terrorism and crime; what, triggers uncertainty is the heavy atmosphere of politicking and partisan division."

Ms Macapagal said the country's economic fundamentals remained solid with the deficit under control. Unfortunately, she said, this piece of positive news has been largely ignored by investors who have been driven away by too much noise from the political arena, with less than six months before election day.

She has long complained that too much politicking by her rivals has been a distraction to more pressing matters in governance. She has also said the division between various sectors in society has held up implementation of urgent reforms.

The President's statement was silent on the politicians in her camp and her own political activities, although it insisted that the country needed "continuity and discipline." She then stepped up her call for reconciliation, announcing a plan to grant general amnesty to both rebels and political prisoners.

*Gil Cabacungan Jr.*

# Comelec to purge bets' list

**By Martin P. Marfil**

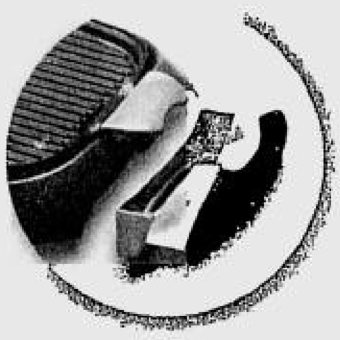
THE COMMISSION on Elections will start weeding out nuisance candidates next week.

This was revealed yesterday by Comelec chair Benjamin Abalos who said that there was no need for some parties to file a protest before the hearings start.

"We do not have to wait for somebody to complain, we could qualify, the commission is granted the authority to qualify people for the position, it is for this reason that starting next week, we have already scheduled about 21 of them to be heard...they would be given due course, (to explain) why they should not be disqualified," Abalos said in a television interview yesterday afternoon.

The process will begin next week and end about the end of the month, he added.

Traditionally, the Comelec disqualifies candidates who do not have the funds and the machinery to wage a national campaign.



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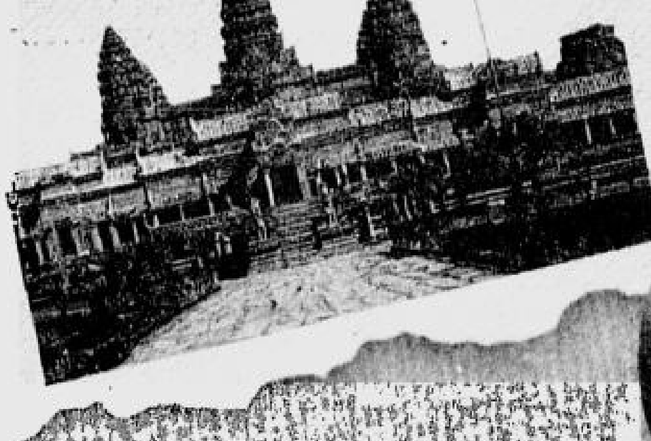

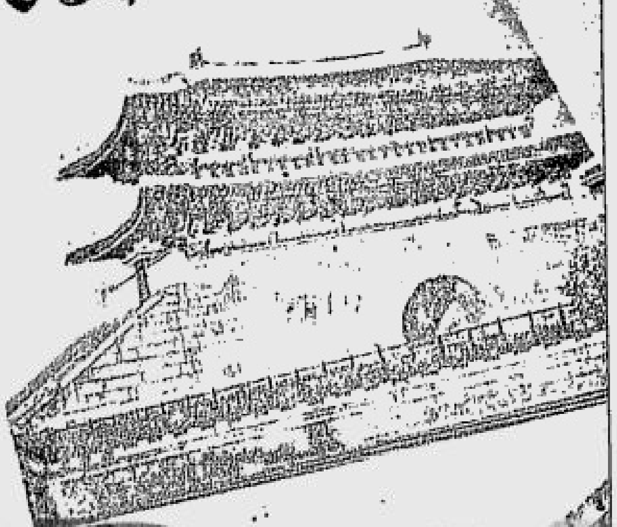

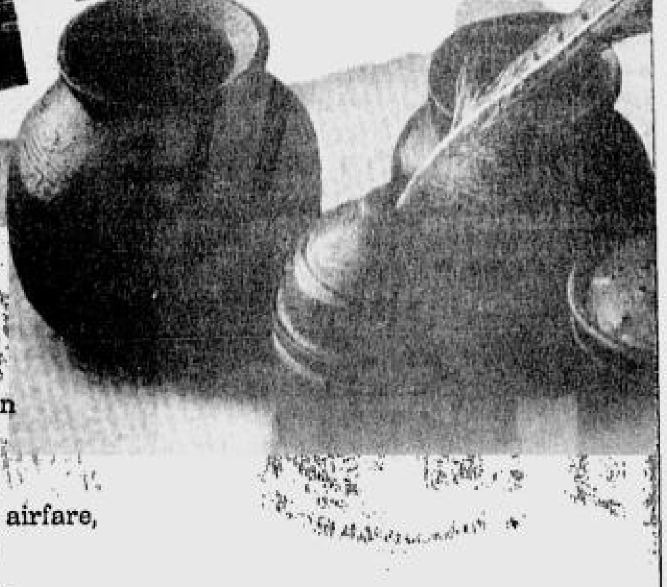

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# Rapist escapes death sentence as prosecution bungles case

By Philip C. Tubeza

A RAPE convict got an early Christmas gift from the Supreme Court after the tribunal reduced his sentence from death to 40 years in prison even though he had abused his own daughter.

The high court cited the prosecution's failure to have the victim affirm in open court that she was raped on Christmas Day in 1996.

"The prosecution failed to prove that appellant is indeed (the victim's) father and that she was under 18 years of age when the crime of rape was committed against her. Because of the prosecution's failure to prove her relationship with appellant and her minority, we cannot hold appellant liable for qualified rape. Hence, reclusion perpetua, and not death, is the correct penalty," said 22-page en banc decision penned by Associate Justice Antonio Carpio.

The SC also reduced the civil indemnity the convict had to pay to his daughter from P75,000 to P50,000. However, it ordered the convict to pay her P50,000 in moral damages.

He was convicted of qualified rape and sentenced to death by the Malabon Regional Trial Court on Aug. 2, 2002 for raping his daughter on Dec. 25, 1996 and again on Oct. 23, 1997.

But when the SC reviewed the cases, it found that the prosecution was negligent in pursuing the case and acquitted him of the charge that he raped his daughter in 1996.

"(The victim) failed to state in open court that appellant raped her on Dec. 25, 1996 with the use of force and intimidation.

## Espino tops Red Cross election

LESLIE Espino, former executive vice president and chief operations officer of the Philippine Airlines, topped the recent election of nine new governors of the Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC).

The election capped the three-day 25th PNRC biennial national convention held at the Manila Pavilion Hotel on Dec. 9-11, 2003.

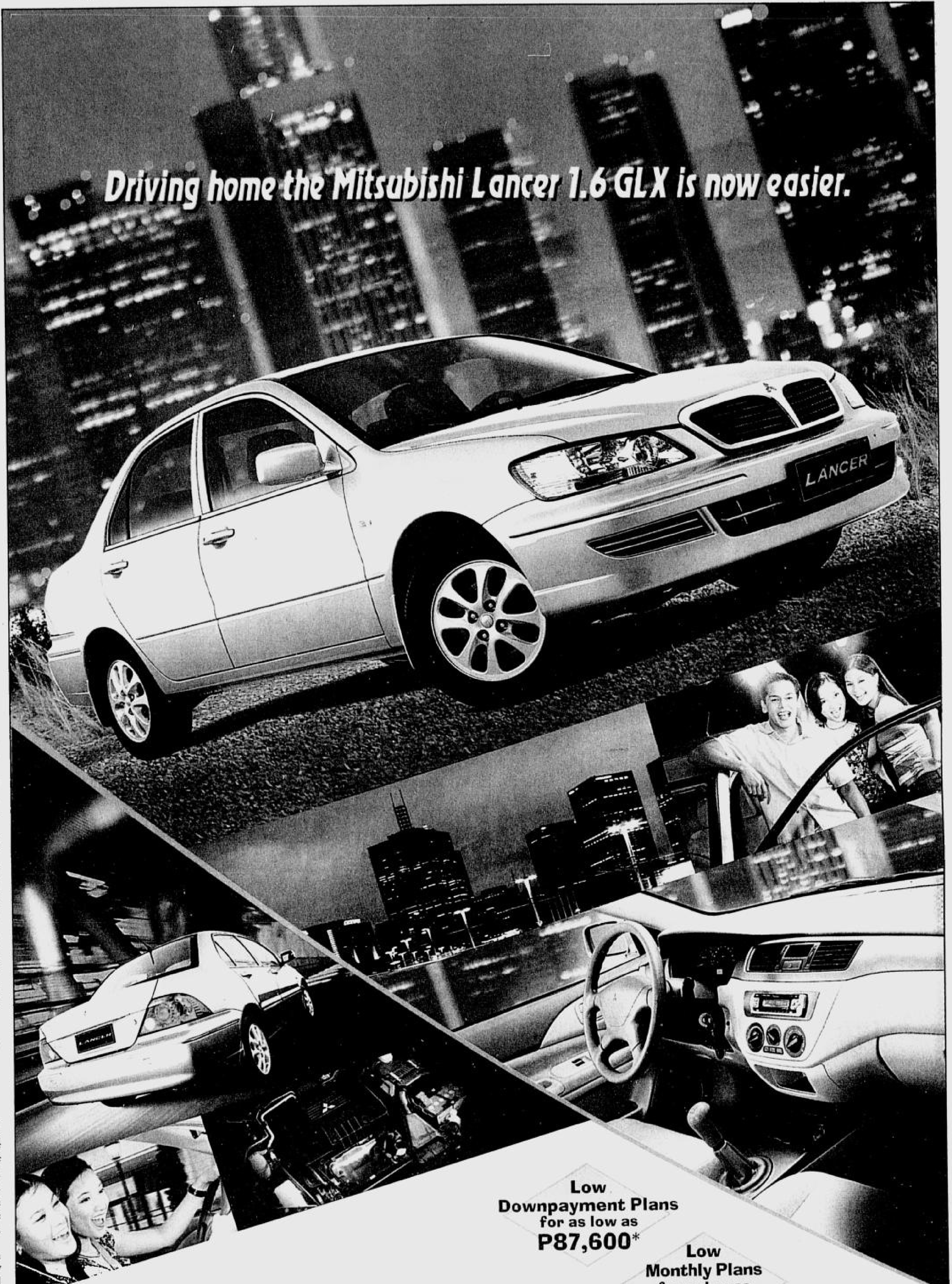
Second place was Leonida "Baby" Ortiz while Lourdes Casas-Quezon placed third.

Other winning candidates were Justice Leonor Ines Luciano, Victor Agbayani, Celso Lobregat, Bai Fatima Sinsuat, former PNRC secretary general Lourdes Loyola and Yolanda Hoffman.

Three of them were reelectionists—Ortiz, Luciano and Hoffman. Except for Quezon and Loyola, the rest were newcomers to the PNRC board of governors.

The board of governors is the highest policy making body of the PNRC.

Election of new officers of the PNRC board of governors will be held early next month.



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# Stop jueteng now, Ebdane tells PNP

By Gil Cabacungan Jr.

PHILIPPINE National Police Director General Hermogenes Ebdane has vowed to crush all jueteng operations nationwide before Christmas as he warned police officials who fail to carry out his order would be given the boot.

In a briefing in Malacañang, Ebdane said he ordered all regional commanders nationwide last December 16 to conduct "anti-jueteng operations, make arrests and file the cases in court to eventually stop jueteng operations."

"We would like that all operations be stopped in less than a week," said Ebdane who noted that the order would be implemented nationwide, including masiao operations in the Visayas and Mindanao.

To underscore how serious he was in stamping out jueteng, Ebdane said he has adopted a one-strike rule in the anti-jueteng drive instead of the normal three-strike rule, which meant no second chances for field commanders, regional commanders, provincial directors and chiefs of police who fail to carry out his order. Ebdane said he would send out intelligence officers nationwide to monitor the performance of each region.

"As long as commanders concerned will do it, I don't see any reason why they can't do it. They have to stop it or they will have to go," Ebdane said.

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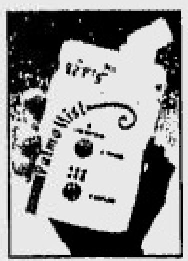

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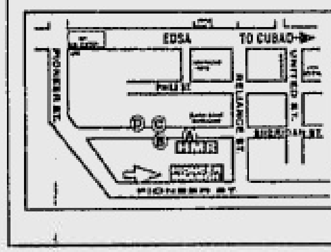

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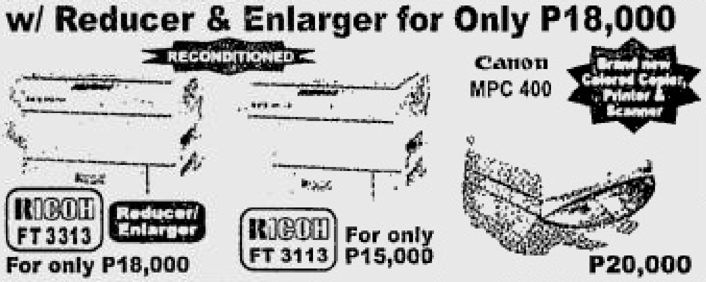

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# NPC-Lakas alliance shaky at local level

RIVALRIES for local posts from congressional to mayoralty seats threaten the stability of the alliance forged by leaders of the ruling Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats and the Nationalist People's Coalition in Malacañang last Wednesday.

This concern was aired by Isabela Rep. Georgidi Aggabao (NPC, Isabela) who noted that unless the rule of the equity of the incumbent is firmly upheld, the covenant would "self destruct."

"It would be a tenuous coalition because local Lakas and NPC leaders could be fighting among themselves at the local level," said Aggabao, who was one of the 25 NPC leaders present during the covenant signing at the Palace.

Aggabao noted that in his case alone, Lakas may field a candidate to challenge him in the 2004 congressional elections.

"If a Lakas candidate runs against me, then I will not support the candidacy of President Macapagal-Arroyo and go to the opposition," he said.

But Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. said that these concerns will be settled by Lakas and NPC as alliance partners.

De Venecia also said that the covenant signing with the NPC, the party founded by businessman Eduardo Cojuangco Jr., will be immediately followed by a similar pact with the Liberal Party.

*Carlito Pablo*

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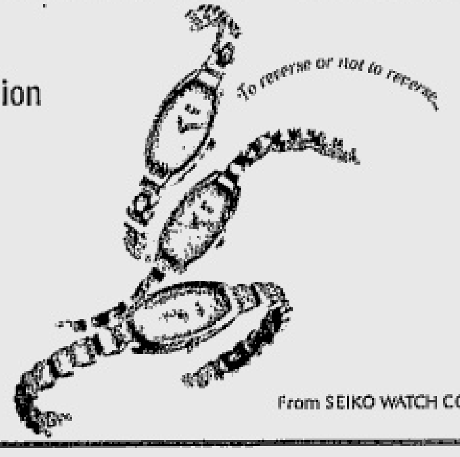

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PER DTI-NCR PERMIT NO. 2787, SERIES OF 2003

# US soldier killed in Baghdad ambush

**BAGHDAD—Iraqi guerrillas killed a US soldier in an ambush in Baghdad, the US military said on Thursday, as two assassinations underlined fears that internal political divisions could erupt into widespread bloodletting.**

The soldier's death on Wednesday night was the first combat fatality suffered by US troops since the announcement on Sunday of the capture of ousted Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein.

In a further example of the violence that has gripped Iraq since Saddam's capture, an official of the largest Shiite Muslim group was killed by Saddam loyalists on Wednesday.

A representative of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) said Muhannad al-Hakim was shot dead near his home in Baghdad's Amil district, after receiving death threats from Saddam backers.

The SCIRI official added that in a separate incident an angry crowd in the southern city of Najaf had attacked and killed Ali al-Zalimi, an official of Saddam's Baath party who had played a role in crushing an uprising by Iraqi Shiites after the 1991 Gulf War.

"What happened was that people surrounded him with guns, and proceeded to shoot and beat him," the official said, identifying the killers only as "residents of Najaf who recognized this criminal."

Political violence has flared among Iraq's Shiites, who make up 60 percent of the population, since the fall of Saddam, whose government killed numerous religious leaders of the community he regarded as a fifth column with ties to Shiite Iran.

SCIRI's leader, Ayatollah Mohammed Baqer al-Hakim, was killed along with about 80 others in August when a car bomb ripped through one of Shiism's holiest shrines, where Hakim had just led worshippers in prayer.

A US spokesperson said a soldier from the 1st Armored Division died in an ambush in the al-Karradah neighborhood of Baghdad at 10:30 p.m. on Wednesday. Another soldier and an Iraqi translator were wounded.

The latest fatality brought to 199 the number of soldiers killed in Iraq by hostile fire since Washington declared major combat over on May 1.

Earlier in the day US forces swept into the town of Samarra, in the so-called "Sunni triangle" in northern and central Iraq where Saddam had his power base, to flush out guerrillas.

Two brigades ringed Samarra, some 100 km north of Baghdad, cutting it off from the outside world while soldiers from a third brigade made house-to-house searches. They also scoured shops and junk yards.

US forces said they arrested 12 more people in Samarra after netting 73 suspects on Tuesday. They also detained three suspects in Baquba, some 65 km north of Baghdad.

The US military said three attackers were killed on Wednesday when they tried to mount a drive-by shooting in the northern city of Mosul. A fourth attacker was wounded.

The military said it had stepped up an offensive to stamp out attacks on US-led occupying forces and Iraqis cooperating with the United States. It blames the attacks on Saddam supporters and foreign Islamic militants.

The US-appointed Governing Council dismissed reports that Saddam, captured by US troops on Saturday at a 'spiderhole' hideout in northern Iraq after eight months on the run, had been moved to the Gulf state of Qatar by US forces. *Reuters*

**2003 IMAGE—A young Iraqi girl cries as a British Challenger tank moves in on the Baath party office in Basra April 8, 2003. British and coalition forces took control over Iraq's second city after two weeks of heavy fighting leading to widespread looting as Iraqi forces retreated over the Shatt Al-Arab river.** AFP

# 2 new US spooks helped bag Saddam

WASHINGTON—Two junior US military intelligence analysts drew a chart of Saddam Hussein's family and tribal connections that led to the capture of the former Iraqi dictator, The Wall Street Journal said Thursday.

From an initial 9,000 names, the two sleuths narrowed the list of Saddam links to 300 names by mid-September, later zeroing in on a key unidentified Iraqi, dubbed "the source," who was captured a day ahead of Saddam's arrest.

The two intelligence officers from the 104th Military Intelligence Batallion—Lt. Angela Santana, 31, and Cpl. Harold Engstrom, 36—said they were totally unprepared when a superior earlier this year gave them four names associated with Saddam's network of supporters.

"Figure it out, draw the lines, make me a chart and find every crucial person connected to Saddam," they were told.

The two analysts—she a former executive secretary, he a former high school English teacher—said the task was daunting since it was their first field experience in military intelligence and they had no idea of the complex structure of the Iraqi resistance.

"We learned about the Iraqi army, structure, history and tribal culture before we got here," said Engstrom, "but it wasn't until we started working on the chart that it really hit us. The extent and depth of how much the tribes were intertwined and integrated was beyond our expectation and frankly shocked us."

The classified, four-page 46-by-42 inch color-coded chart with 300 names they developed was nicknamed "Mongo Link" and quickly became known in military circles for its accuracy.

The months of intelligence work put in by Santana and Engstrom finally paid off when they singled out an individual they believed belonged to Saddam's inner circle and whom several detainees had identified as an influential leader financing the resistance.

They alerted the US military to hunt him down and on Friday he was captured in a house raid in Baghdad. *AFP*

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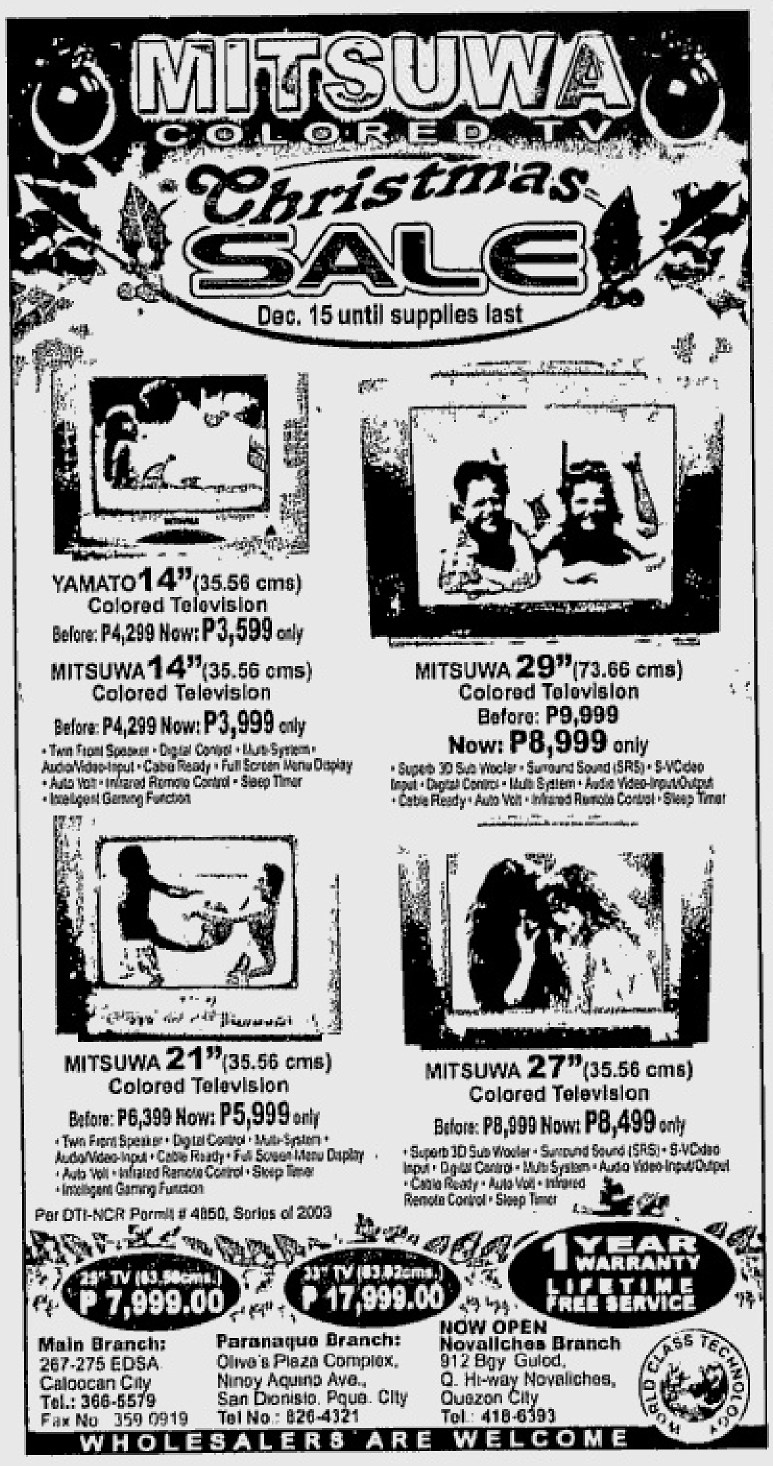

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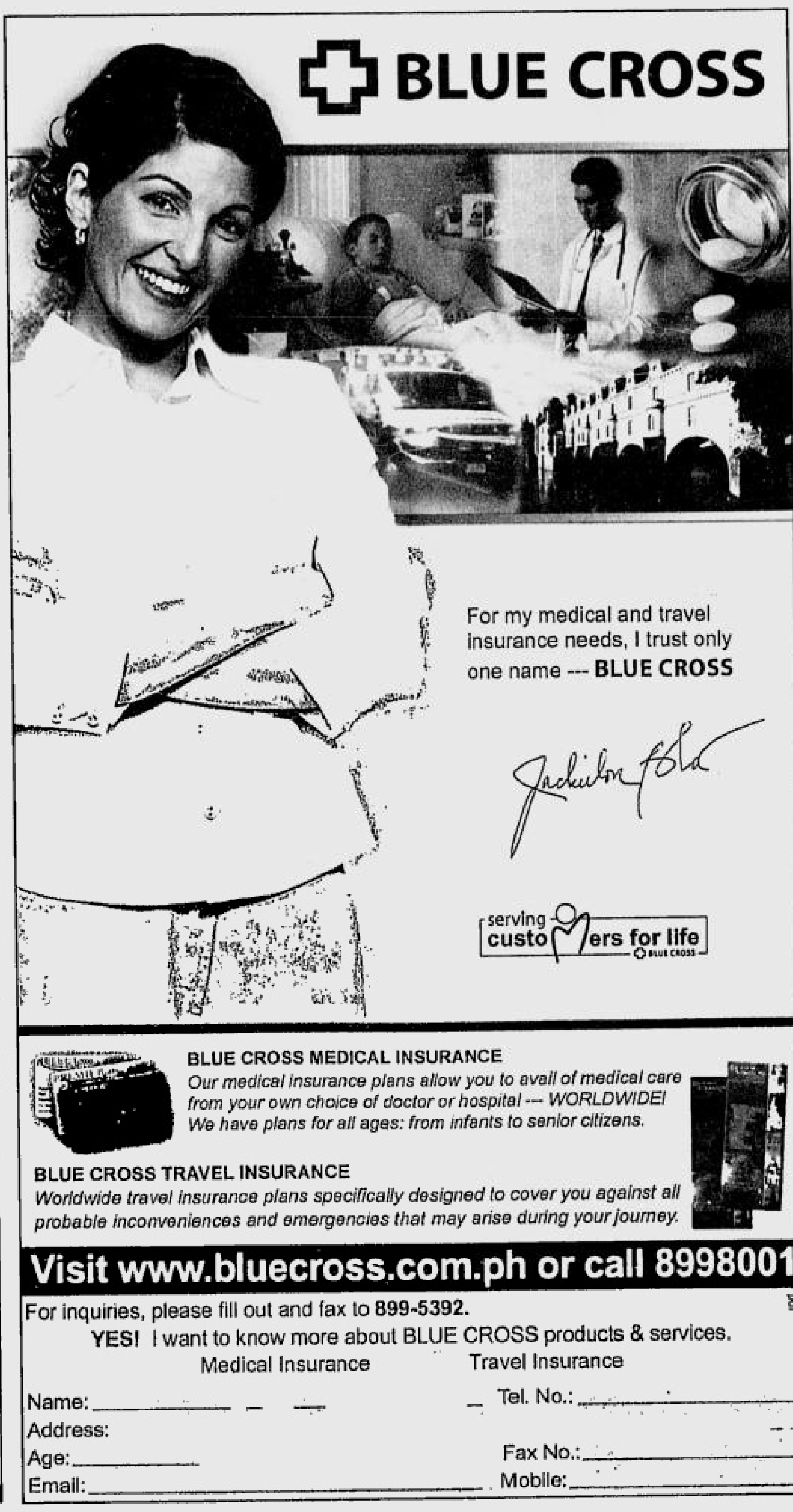

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## WORLDBRIEFS

### Wright flight replica

KILL DEVIL HILLS, North Carolina—An attempt to honor the Wright brothers by recreating their historic first powered flight 100 years ago ended in a muddy failure on Wednesday. After delays caused by heavy rain, a replica of The Flyer, the muslin-shrouded plane which carried Orville Wright 36.5 meters on Dec. 17, 1903, ended up in a muddy puddle in 2003. President George W. Bush joined thousands of people under drenching rain in the sand dunes at Kill Devil Hills, near the resort of Kitty Hawk, but was too busy to wait for the weather to clear for the attempt. The attempt to repeat the flight was meant to be one of the highlights of a year of commemorations for today's anniversary. *AFP*

### France headscarf ban

PARIS—French President Jacques Chirac called on Wednesday for a law banning Islamic headscarves and other religious symbols in state schools, despite protests from Muslims in France and across the world. In a televised speech after months of debate on the role of religion in French society which highlighted the difficulties of Muslim integration, Chirac urged parliament to pass the law before the next school year starts in September. The ban will extend to other religious symbols including Jewish skullcaps and large Christian crosses, but France's top Muslim representative said it mainly targeted Islam and would further alienate the country's five million Muslims. *Reuters*

### Ex-US governor charged

A FORMER US governor, touted as a potential candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize for his stance against the death penalty, has been indicted in connection with a long-running corruption scandal, prosecutors said Wednesday. Former Illinois Gov. George Ryan, who gained fame when he commuted all pending Illinois death sentences 48 hours before leaving office, was charged with taking bribes in return for using his position to steer state contracts to cronies. "We are alleging that the State of Illinois was for sale for families and friends," said Patrick Fitzgerald, US attorney for the northern district of Illinois, as he spelled out the case against the retired politician. *AFP*

### Reagan shooter

WASHINGTON—John Hinckley, the man who shot US President Ronald Reagan in 1981, on Wednesday got court authorization to make unsupervised visits from a Washington psychiatric hospital to his parents' home in neighboring Virginia. The ruling by the US District Court for the District of Columbia was strongly criticized by Nancy Reagan, the former president's wife, who said she fears for the "safety of the general public." And Roscoe Howard, US Attorney for the District of Columbia, said his office remained "concerned" that "Mr. Hinckley will endanger himself or others if granted unescorted release." Hinckley, 48, will now be allowed to make local day and overnight visits to his parents' Virginia home without being accompanied by a hospital employee. He is not, however, permitted to travel out of the Washington area. *AFP*

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# Disgraced Milosevic expected to win seat in Serbian parliament

BELGRADE—As the world mulls plans for a trial of former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, Yugoslavia's ex-strongman and war crimes suspect Slobodan Milosevic is clawing back political influence, showing that disgrace and infamy are no obstacle to political ambition.

Three years after being driven from office and almost two since his war crimes trial began at The Hague-based UN court, former Yugoslav president Milosevic is expected to win a parliamentary seat in this month's elections.

Milosevic and his former ally, ultra-nationalist Vojislav Seselj, are contesting the Dec. 28 elections from their prison cells near The Hague, under laws which ban only convicted prisoners from running for parliament.

Another two war crimes suspects, Deputy Interior Minister General Sreten Lukic and former army chief of staff Nebojsa Pavkovic—both fugitives from the UN court—are also running on separate party lists.

Analysts said that despite a gag order slapped on Milosevic last week by his UN guards, he and Seselj are likely to win places in the new assembly by taking advantage of the sympathies of ordinary Serbs.

"Both Milosevic and Seselj will almost certainly become deputies after the elections," analyst Nenad Stefanovic said.

"Theoretically speaking, Milosevic or Seselj could even be elected parliamentary speaker, becoming at the same time acting president of Serbia."

Serbia has failed to elect a president three times in the past 15 months due to insufficient turnout. After Dec. 28, the new parliamentary speaker will automatically become acting president until an elected head of state is in place.

Analysts said that even if Milosevic was nominated for the post of speaker he would not win the support of the majority of parliament.

Stefanovic said a "more real danger" is that as an elected deputy he would be able to "decide who of the most loyal party officials enters parliament and through them to directly influence political life in the country."

Milosevic's Socialist Party of Serbia is a shadow of its former self and is not expected to win more than a handful of seats on Dec. 28. *AFP*

# New World Trade Center to take 10 years, $12 billion to build

NEW YORK—Rebuilding New York's World Trade Center—destroyed in the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks—will take 10 years and cost some $12 billion, leaseholder Larry Silverstein said Wednesday.

He estimated the redevelopment effort would generate up to $19 billion in economic activity and provide 10,000 construction jobs for each year of the work.

Upon completion, the new trade center complex will have an estimated annual economic impact of $15.7 billion and generate 75,000 full time jobs in Lower Manhattan.

Silverstein said the cornerstone of the redeveloped site's centerpiece—a 1,776-foot high "Freedom Tower"—should be laid before next year's third anniversary of the attacks.

The tower—to replace the destroyed twin towers that had been a landmark of the Manhattan skyline—will be topped out at the end of 2008 and the last of four other office towers is slated for completion on 2013.

"What we have to accomplish, is to achieve nothing less than greatness," Silverstein told a luncheon hosted by the New York Building Congress.

"This is going to be the most spectacular community to live and work in once the World Trade Center has been rebuilt," he added.

The cost of the redevelopment will be met through $5 billion in federal aid and $7 billion in insurance payments, the property developer said, drawing a wry laugh from his audience.

Silverstein is currently locked in a bitter legal battle with the insurers, who say they will pay only half of his $7 billion claim.

The case, which will go to federal court in February, rests on whether the destruction of the twin towers by hijacked planes on Sept. 11 comprised one attack, as the insurers claim, or two separate attacks as Silverstein contends. *AFP*

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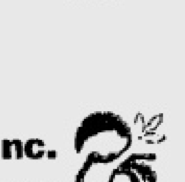
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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 4680, Series of 2003.

**STRANGE BEDFELLOWS** Only a few years ago these two men were engaged in a deadly cat-and-mouse game. Now, Sen. Panfilo Lacson, former PNP chief, and Sotero Llamas, former top communist leader in Bicol, are allies and party mates. And candidates, too. Lacson, who is running for president, raises the hand of Llamas, who is running for Albay governor, during a mass oath-taking for LDP members in Legazpi City. JOE GALVEZ/LACSON'S OFFICE

**MOVE over, "Jeep ni Erap." Here comes GMA who is mightily pleased that five jeepney drivers and operators organizations, led by Orlando Marquez, have pledged to support her bid for a full six-year term in Malacañang. Behind the President is Energy Secretary Vince Perez Jr.** VAL HANDUMON

# 'No admission, no amnesty'

From page A1

amnesty or in any Malacañang-orchestrated settlement.

## Not interested

Ousted President Joseph Estrada, who is facing plunder charges before the Sandiganbayan; is not interested in amnesty.

His lawyer Raymond Fortun told GMA-7 last night that he would rather stand trial than avail himself of the proposed amnesty because he was innocent of the crimes attributed to him.

Even Pimentel has misgivings about the possible inclusion of Estrada among those who would be granted amnesty.

"I doubt it, but I will have to study [Estrada's] case thoroughly," the senator said

## Political crimes

Senate President Franklin Drilon, on the other hand, said the proposed amnesty should cover only political crimes and not cases involving graft and corruption, thus disqualifying not only Estrada but also the Marcos heirs and their cronies.

The Marcoses have pending cases before the Sandiganbayan involving the illegal wealth they allegedly amassed during the dictatorship.

Drilon defined political crimes as "those committed in the pursuit of a political objective."

"It would be improper to include crimes like plunder, which involves graft and corruption, in the proposed amnesty," he said in a statement.

Drilon said he was familiar with the legal principles involved in the grant of amnesty because he served twice as justice secretary and was once a member of the National Amnesty Commission.

In announcing her proposal, Ms Macapagal said a five-member healing and reconciliation commission would identify the persons, institutions and organizations to be granted amnesty. She said she did not give "specific names" because she would be involved only in "strategic directions" and not "operational decisions."

ESTRADA: Not interested

DRILON: Only political crimes

PIMENTEL: Extreme caution

BARBERS: Admit crimes first

## Political gimmick

But opposition Sen. Serge Osmeña III said the proposed amnesty would not do the country any good and was a mere "political gimmick" of the Macapagal administration rather than a "national reconciliation effort."

"National reconciliation can only be based on justice, and those who have plundered the country must be made to pay," Osmeña told reporters.

He said the proposed amnesty bill would look like a "class legislation" because, he pointed out, the thieving rich would be given amnesty while those languishing in jail for estafa involving P1,000 or less would remain behind bars.

'This kind of public policy,' he said, would be "unfair" to the poor and would make the people "lose confidence in the justice system."

"It will allow people who have committed crimes to get away with it, and I'm absolutely against it," Osmeña said, and likened the proposed bill to a pending measure that seeks to grant tax amnesty.

He said he was opposing the tax amnesty bill "for the simple reason that those paying taxes are the poor through their salary deductions, while the rich who don't pay their taxes would just wait to be granted amnesty."

Pimentel also urged Ms Macapagal to "define the parameters of the proposed settlement so that it will not be used as a basis for political gimmickry."

## PR mileage

Teodoro Casiño, secretary general of the militant Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, said Ms Macapagal's planned general amnesty could be intended to generate public relations mileage in the run-up to the 2004 elections.

"There are existing amnesty programs, such as those [for] political prisoners. This plan offers nothing new" and may just be meant to woo more votes and support from certain sectors," Casiño told the INQUIRER in an interview.

He also said Ms Macapagal's supposed attempts to be on good terms with the Marcos and Estrada camps were "cause for alarm" given the pending criminal cases involving the two deposed leaders.

Fernando Hicap, national chair of the militant fisher folk group Pamalakaya, described the proposed general amnesty as "detestable and highly inflammatory."

"No person in his or her right mind would approve this shotgun piece of legislation. This is a direct affront to the collective intelligence of the public," Hicap said. *With a report from Norman Bordadora*

# 'Dyip ni Gloria'

From page A1

Macapagal-Arroyo a joint manifesto of support for her bid to win a full six-year term in May.

"Among those who have expressed their intent to run for the highest office, we see no one best fitted for the job other than the President herself," the manifesto read. It was signed by the presidents of the five transport groups: Zenaida Maranan for Fejodap, Melencio "Boy" Vargas for Altodap, Efren de Luna for PCDO-ACTO, Lando Marquez for Makati Jeepney Operators and Drivers Association and Roberto "Ka Obet" Martin for Pasang-Masda.

In return, Ms Macapagal handed the transport leaders plaques of appreciation signed by Energy Secretary Vince Perez, who thanked them for supporting the President.

## Lifestyle checks

The groups cited Ms Macapagal's lifestyle checks among government officials, saying they think these have been proven effective in stopping graft and corruption.

They also said Ms Macapagal has taken bold steps to neutralize the illegal drug menace in the country.

"Her leadership style and hands-on management in government affairs have allowed her to feel the pulse of the people and truly understand the needs and wants of the citizenry, especially the transport sector," they said.

The transport leaders said Ms Macapagal expressed her support for the jeepney sector "in no uncertain terms" in her State of the Nation Address and followed it up with concrete programs.

They said they wanted continuity of her administration's policies to ensure the pursuit of reform and economic growth.

After Maranan read the resolution on behalf of the group, a beaming President said, "Thank you, thank you."

When asked by Palace reporters if the transport groups' support meant they would not raise transport fares, the President replied: "I'm thankful to them."

Maranan had initially said the five jeepney groups would not raise fares for as long as Ms Macapagal was president. But she later said the fares would stay for as long as the big oil companies continue to extend the P15.50 per liter discount for diesel to passenger jeepneys.

## Solid support

Maranan said the five jeepney groups, including their families and friends, would be "solid" behind Ms Macapagal's candidacy.

"That includes campaigning for her, because we have felt her support for us," she said in Filipino. "We may not have received the support the bus industry has received, but today we still feel her support. We may be poor, but we're human too, but we do understand that she's a good leader and should remain the President of the Philippines.

Marquez, a mechanical engineer who has pioneered air-conditioned jeepneys in Makati City and a few other routes in Metro Manila, said he was the one who designed the "Jeep ni Erap" in 1998.

*"Naunsiyami kami, hindi kami nabigyan ng tulong* (We were frustrated, he did not help us)," Marquez said.

## Helped with loan

But he said Ms Macapagal helped them obtain a P25-million loan with the Postal Bank for the development of the jeepney, an original Filipino creation out of World War II scraps.

"With the President's help, there is nothing we cannot do," he said.

He said three countries have placed orders for the aircon jeep, a 25-capacity coaster-type vehicle.

He said Papua New Guinea has ordered 4,000 units, Vietnam 75 and Guam 50.

He said aircon jeeps now ply the streets of Makati, Divisoria, Marikina and Ayala-Cavite. Fare is P7 for the first four kilometers.

Ms Macapagal inspected one such unit brought right outside the Palace lobby, where she also posed for pictures with her transport allies.

# Do a Laurel, GMA ally urges Roco

From page A1

shelve plans to file his certificate of candidacy as Aquino's running mate. "What heroism. What statesmanship. If there were heroes and statesmen before, why not now?" Baltazar said.

Pimentel, she recalled, never nurtured ill-feelings toward Aquino and Laurel even if he was made to give way at the last minute.

"Pimentel had prepared a parade and caravan to go with him as he filed his candidacy before the Comelec. It was his birthday then," she recalled the day Pimentel was asked to give way to Laurel.

Baltazar noted that Pimentel even actively campaigned for the candidacy of Aquino and Laurel, who eventually lost to Marcos and Arturo Tolentino in the 1986 election that was believed to have been rigged by the dictator. Marcos was ousted in a people power revolution.

"They (Pimentel and Laurel) have subsumed their own political ambitions for the good of the country. If they can do it before, Senator Roco should also consider doing the same now," Baltazar said.

## Patriotic duty

But Roco, a former senator, said those worried about a Fernando Poe Jr. victory should instead call on the President to withdraw from the race. Roco said that even if he slid down to be Ms Macapagal's running mate, his supporters would not root for Ms Macapagal.

"But her voters may transfer to me. (So) she should withdraw. The patriotic duty is on her part," Roco said.

He reiterated that the "national consensus" was to change the administration. "The only question is whom to replace it with."

Later Roco added that a teamup that can beat the Macapagal administration was that of Roco-FPJ.

## Roco-FPJ

"FPJ (Poe) can slide down as vice president so we can beat the establishment," he said.

He said the continuing "propaganda" that he should slide down betrays Malacañang's "desperation."

Roco has chosen to file his certificate of candidacy on Dec. 30, Rizal Day. It is exactly a month after his proclamation rally on Bonifacio Day.

In a telephone interview, Baltazar said Roco also enjoyed strong support from Konsensyang Pilipino, a network of 80 nongovernment organizations that helped install Ms Macapagal into office.

But she said the present crop of officials should learn from the past. "Divided we fall, united we will win." Her group shudders at the thought of living under a government led by Poe, an actor, or Sen. Panfilo Lacson, according to Baltazar.

# Health secretary warns of renewed SARS threat

From page A1

Filipino victims were mostly health workers and domestic helpers abroad.

## Search is on

From Taiwan, a wide international net was cast against a new SARS threat as officials revealed Thursday that the infected scientist had not gone into strict home quarantine after falling ill, and that two possibly exposed coworkers were in the United States.

The search is also on for five foreigners who traveled on the same plane as the 44-year-old man—identified only by his rank and surname, Lieutenant Colonel Chan—more than a week ago.

So far, at least 90 people in Taiwan and Singapore have been quarantined, although none has developed SARS symptoms.

The developments raise disturbing questions about decisions made by the man who, officials said, probably caught SARS while mishandling virus samples in his Taipei laboratory. Officials had said he was not wearing safety gear, such as a gown and gloves.

Although the scientist suspected that he might have been exposed to the highly contagious virus from a spilled test tube, he flew to Singapore on Dec. 7 to attend a conference, officials said.

Singapore has quarantined 70 people who had contact with the man, now isolated in the Hoping Hospital in Taipei.

Separately in China, authorities have ordered all researchers to hand in SARS samples as a precaution against similar lab accidents.

In Taiwan, 20 people are under quarantine. These include the man's family, people at a medical clinic he visited after getting sick, and some passengers on a plane he had flown in from Singapore.

Officials were looking for three Americans, a Japanese and a Singaporean who also flew with the scientist when he returned to Taipei from Singapore on Dec. 10.

## Tracing his movements

When the scientist tested positive for SARS on Wednesday, officials said he had quarantined himself at home since developing a fever on the night of his return.

Officials had said the man did not show symptoms during his travels and probably did not infect anyone.

But on Thursday, Shih Wen-yi, a spokesperson for Taiwan's Center for Disease Control, told a news conference that the man did not stay at home the entire time after that.

This was how Shih recounted the man's movements:

The scientist spent the night at his work dormitory on Dec. 10. The next day, his wife drove him to a suburban medical clinic in Taipei. He was then wearing a surgical mask.

After his checkup, the scientist went back home and waited five days before he went to a hospital—a violation of guidelines that require SARS researchers to seek immediate hospital care, according to Shih.

"Maybe our awareness campaign was not enough," said Shih, who declined to discuss possible disciplinary action against the scientist.

The clinic's receptionist and doctor have been quarantined along with five people related to the clinic's staff, Shih said, adding that there were no other patients in the clinic at the time.

Shih also said that two colleagues who went to Singapore with the scientists traveled to the United States on Dec. 10.

The colleagues, who worked for the Ministry of Defense, have been ordered to return to Taiwan on Sunday, said Shih.

He refused to say where the men were in America but said the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention were monitoring the men, who had shown no SARS symptoms.

## Mistakes

The Taiwanese are now focusing on the scientist's mistakes.

Officials have said that he might have been infected by spilled virus samples while rushing to clean his laboratory, where he had been testing how SARS responds to different medicines.

Shih declined to discuss the lab conditions and a claim by the WHO that the scientist was not wearing protective gear. He said an investigative report would be released in three days.

Defense Minister Tang Yiau-ming defended the scientist, saying the latter had his wife, two adult daughters and father stay in separate homes after he got sick.

"Because he performed this dangerous work, he understands its danger, so he exerted the utmost effort to prevent [mistakes]," Tang said.

But Tang acknowledged that mistakes were made.

"With people, you cannot avoid shortcomings and negligence," he said. "This is natural, this we have to improve. If there was no negligence, this case would not have happened, so I offer my sincere apologies to my compatriots." *Reports from Blanche S. Rivera and AP*

**SMOKE-BELCHERS** like this mega-taxi will continue to be a sight on the road with government's decision to delay the implementation of the Clean Air Act. PDI FILE PHOTO

# *Clear skies over RP to wait another 5 years*

From page A1

tries using diesel, we have decided to defer for five years the CAA compliance to the sulphur level of the industrial sector," Perez said.

The three-day conference, dubbed "Better Air Quality," was organized by the Clean Air Initiative for Asian Cities, a project of the Asian Development Bank, World Bank and other development agencies.

But he said the energy department would continue to encourage these industries to fall in line with the low-sulphur diesel rules as soon as possible.

The Philippines, an importer of crude and oil products, uses 135,000 to 157,500 barrels per day (bpd) of diesel, about 45 percent of its 300,000 to 350,000 bpd total oil product demand, Pilipinas Shell country chairman Edgar Chua said in October.

Early this year, local oil firms raised gasoline prices after the government imposed a maximum aromatics content of 35 percent and lowered the benzene content to 2 percent from 4 percent.

## 500,000 deaths

According to other experts who spoke at the conference in Manila, pollution in the skies over Asia's booming cities is responsible for 500,000 deaths every year and the working lives of many are shortened by health problems from breathing filthy air.

Nepal's capital, Kathmandu, now tops a list of 17 Asian cities with the dirtiest air, followed by New Delhi, according to a World Bank report presented at the conference. Jakarta and Chongqing, China's second-largest city, share third place.

Chris Hoban, acting World Bank director for the Philippines, said every 1,000 people in urban East Asia and the Pacific were losing more than 12 productive years due to disability caused by air pollution.

But the situation can improve—and is—through better air quality management by governments backed by greater public awareness of the problem.

## Bangkok case

Hoban cited the case of Bangkok, where the visibility at the city's airport improved from about 5 km in 1996 to 9 km in 2000.

And, in Bangladesh's capital Dhaka, the phase-out of two-stroke engine on motorcycle taxis has slashed concentrations of fine, airborne particulate matter by 41 percent, he said.

People are demanding cleaner air and there is a shift toward longer-term solutions. The private sector is getting involved and regional initiatives to control air quality are on the upswing, said Geert van der Linden, vice president of the Asian Development Bank.

"These trends, together with rapid developments in technology, which can substantially reduce pollution from both stationary and mobile sources gives us reason to be optimistic that air quality in Asia will improve in the years to come," he said.

Hoban listed among immediate priorities the removal of the smoky oil-burning two-stroke engines, better management of high-polluting buses and trucks as well as maintenance of commercial vehicles and control of road dust.

Governments in Asia have adopted policy guidelines that focus on reducing pollution from vehicles, including motorcycles and three-wheel taxis, which are common in the region. They cover emission standards, traffic planning and management, use of clean fuels, as well as inspections and maintenance. *Reports from Reuters and AP*

# Debrah Lyn's pa won't be home for Christmas

From page A1

brah Lyn in her arms.

"He has yet to see our daughter. I hope the President would help us bring him back home soon. Our daughter would be christened on Sunday," she told the INQUIRER.

Mondragon left the country on Jan. 17 for a two-year employment contract in Jeddah. He left the Saudi factory four months into his contract after the company who hired his services failed to pay his just wages.

"Like the other hunger strikers, my husband wants to come home badly," Anna added.

Sixteen members of the Kami-SR are involved in the hunger strike. They are engineer Domingo Yalung, Ernesto Villarama, Froilan de Guzman, Jimmy de la Paz, Jose Danny Ladiana, Danny Morales, Paulino Buslon, Roberto Pacquin, Jerry Ranes, Melvin Batayolam, Reynaldo Cariño, Jesulito Mergunio, Cesar Evangelista, Pepito Mepania, Jose Tejada and Mondragon.

"(We) would like to ask your help to repatriate us, if not, to expedite the transfer to our new sponsorship.... We expect you to negotiate for us with the Saudi royal hierarchy that you would meet in this Kingdom during your visit," said Kami-SR in a letter to Ms Macapagal dated Sept. 4, 2003.

**WHERE'S papa?** Five-month-old Debrah Lyn has no idea what the fuss is all about but it looks almost certain her father Danny won't be home for Christmas. JOAN BONDOC

The letter was sent through mail and through the President's e-mail before Ms Macapagal's visit to the oil-rich nation.

"What is there to celebrate on this day of migrants when the people we recognize are treated like criminals and dirt in the host countries," said John Monterona, vice chairperson of the Migrante Sectoral Party.

According to Migrante, some 300 Filipino workers in Saudi Arabia are either stranded or unjustly languishing in jails. Deemed illegal aliens under Saudi law, runaways are forced into hiding both from the government and from their errant employers.

"What compassion does this government have when their proclaimed '*bagong bayani* (modern-day heroes)' remain in jails, cramped welfare centers and unsympathetic diplomatic posts," Monterona added.

# 'Bulacan's modern day hero'

From page A1

Barasoain Church in Malolos City later on Saturday and, on Sunday morning, will be taken to the Libingan ng mga Bayani in Makati where he will be buried.

Philippine flags at the provincial capitol and municipal halls in Bulacan were flown at half-mast. Streamers expressing condolences for Ople lined the highways leading to Hagonoy.

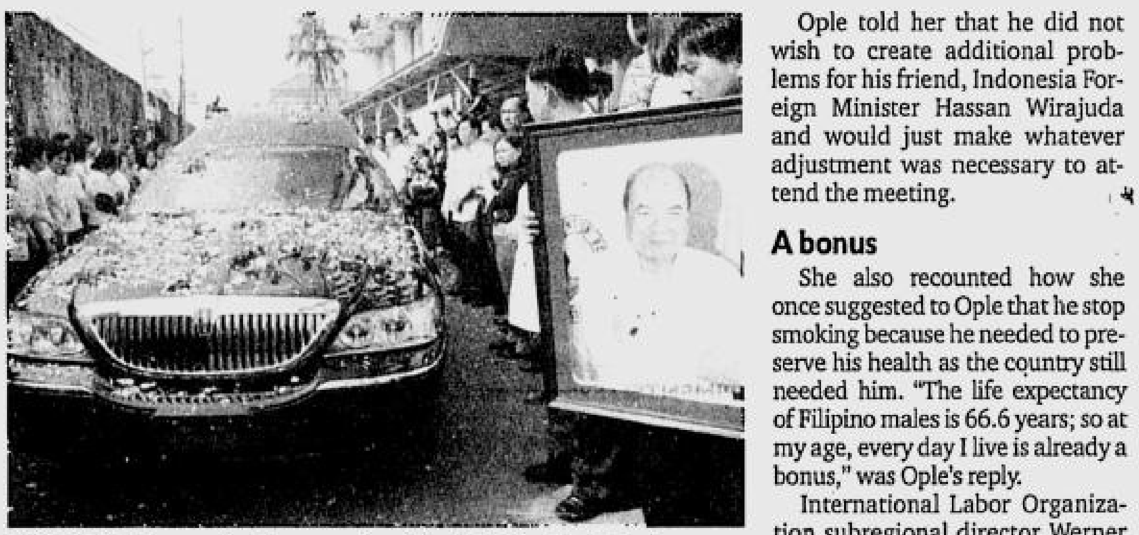
Bulakeños touched by the deeds of Ople started to flock to the Oples' house in Barangay Sta. Monica as soon as they heard the news of the secretary's death on Dec. 14.

Mila Lopez, an official from Barangay Sta. Cruz, said people condoled with the family by bringing flowers and lighting candles when they heard the news that Ople had died of heart attack in Taiwan. "They were very sad. There was no one here that Amang had not helped," she said.

## Cheers

At the DFA building, Philippine Ambassador to Bangladesh Joselino Guerrero led the cheering as Ople's coffin was brought into the hearse. The cortege left the DFA compound around 1 p.m., to the accompaniment of a slow march played by a military band.

DFA's five undersecretaries led employees in eulogizing Ople during necrological services at Mabini Hall from 8 a.m. to noon.



**THE HEARSE,** carrying the remains of the late Blas Ople, is strewn with flowers by employees of the Department of Labor where he served for 18 years. ERIK ARAZAS

Undersecretary for administration Franklin Ebdalin called Ople "our father and our guide."

"While he was ambitious in his ideas, he remained grounded and centered ... He dwelt not on his greatness but embraced his humanity. He was unconcerned with the trappings of power and influence, but instead focused on how they could be used to uplift the common man with whom he shared and cared for so much," he said.

DFA Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Affairs Jose Brillantes, who said he has known Ople for 36 years, called him "an intellectual giant whose love of country, devotion to the national interest and passion for public service, consumed himself and enriched all of us."

## Panoramic vision

He said Ople was one of the few gifted with *weltanschaung*, a German expression which means a panoramic vision of the world and of life.

DFA Undersecretary for Policy Sonia Brady praised Ople's indefatigability. She recalled that during the Asean-Japan summit in Tokyo, which they both attended last week, she asked why Ople agreed to the schedule of the Asean foreign ministers summit in Jakarta on June 30 next year, which coincides with the date of the presidential inauguration.

Ople told her that he did not wish to create additional problems for his friend, Indonesia Foreign Minister Hassan Wirajuda and would just make whatever adjustment was necessary to attend the meeting.

## A bonus

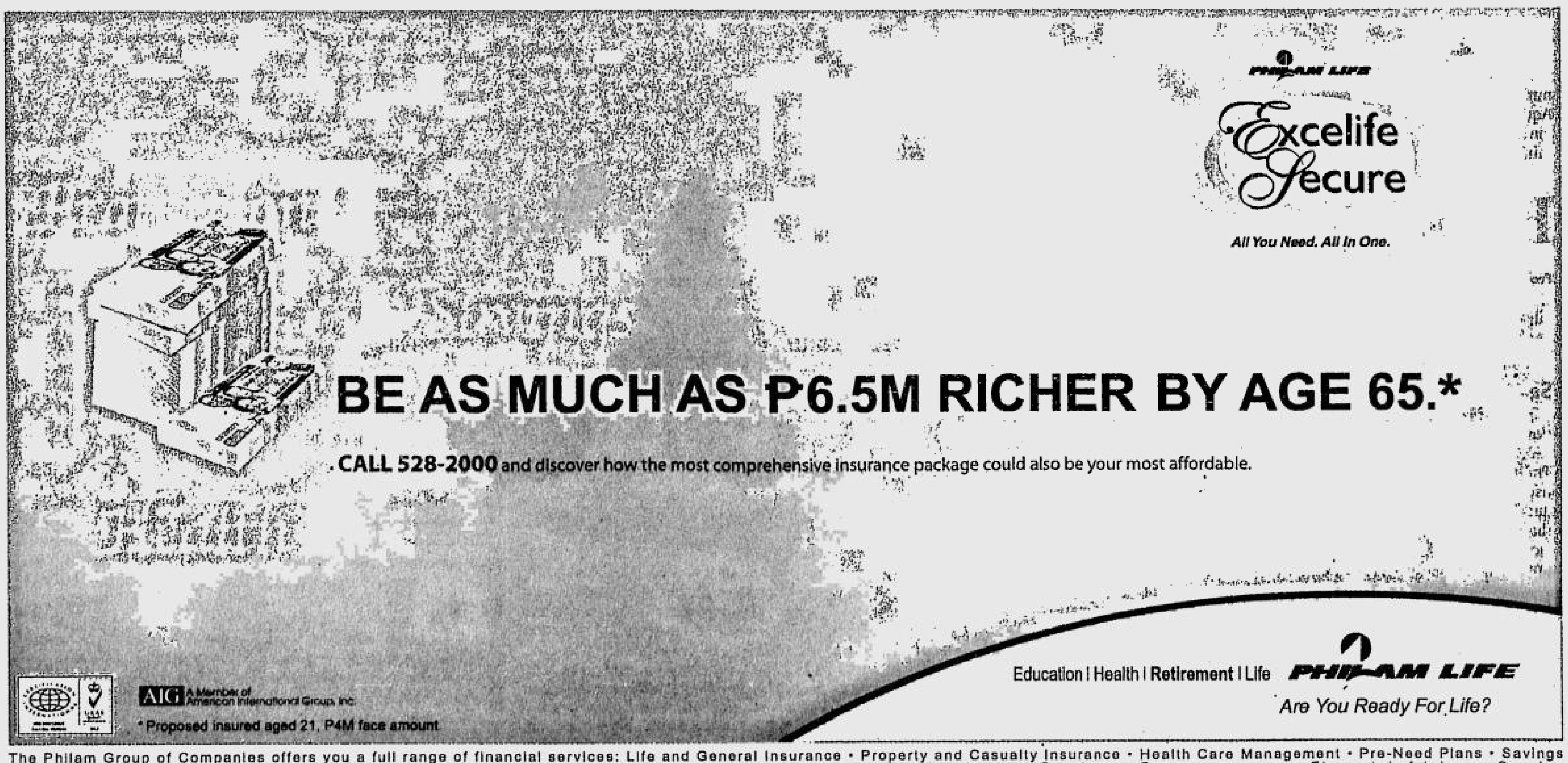
She also recounted how she once suggested to Ople that he stop smoking because he needed to preserve his health as the country still needed him. "The life expectancy of Filipino males is 66.6 years; so at my age, every day I live is already a bonus," was Ople's reply.

International Labor Organization subregional director Werner Konrad Blenk, Asean Deputy Secretary General Wilfrido Villacorta, presidential adviser on international competitiveness Roberto Romulo, and Speaker Jose de Venecia also eulogized Ople.

DFA reporters presented a two-minute presentation showing clips and footage of Ople dealing with the press.

RPN-9's Harold Geronimo, who read the eulogy, said: "The long list of his achievements are there for the books. But the memories are for keeps. Oftentimes, we admire officials we cover for their wit, intelligence, charisma, competence and professionalism."

At the end of the service, Archbishop Antonio Franco, dean of the diplomatic corps, gave a brief message and Freddie Aguilar sang the patriotic song "Bayan Ko."



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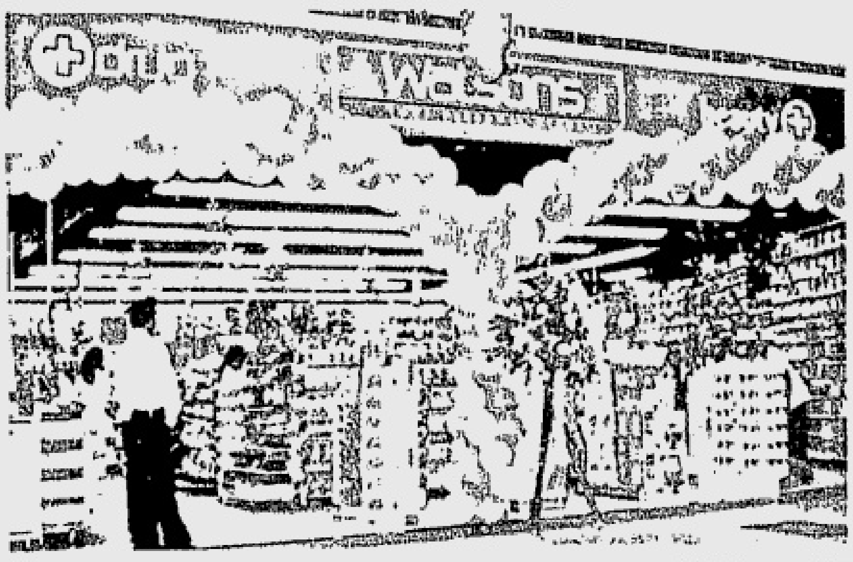
# WATSONS A diverse product mix for a variety of lifestyles



Watsons aims to provide the Filipino market with a totally new shopping experience as it caters to different lifestyles with its wide assortment of products from drug to toiletries to novelty items.

The store's format is designed around a "discovery" concept that creates the brand's distinctive shopping experience: "Look Good. Feel Great. Have Fun."

Building upon its well-earned reputation for quality, innovation and high degree of consumer confidence, Watsons has evolved a store format with unrivalled product mix to a preferred destination for shoppers on the look-out for great value buys.

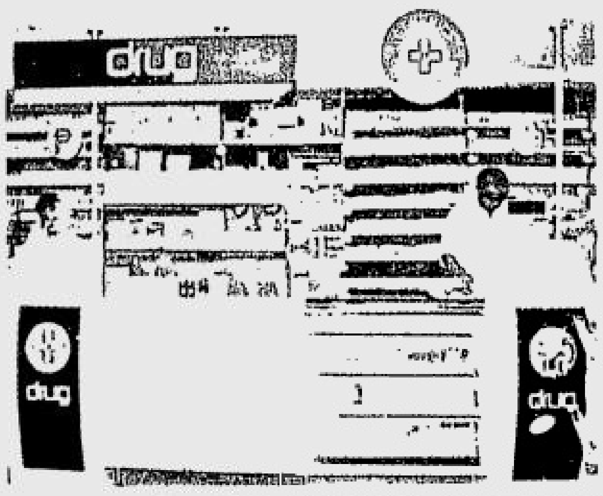
Watsons retail section of the store carries a diverse array of personal health and beauty care products, toys and giftables. On the other hand, the pharmacy section carries a comprehensive line of over-the-counter and prescription medicine.

**WATSONS FARMERS RIBBON-CUTTING CEREMONIES-** Nigel A.S. Healey, Watsons Managing Director, cuts the ribbon. Assisting him are Fe Tañon, Store Manager and Grace Rivera, Merchandise Director.

Wats
YOUR PERSONA
Story of Color
SPECIALS
Nail Designs
Issey Miyake L'Eau D' Issey Light
Issey Miyake L'Eau D' Issey Pour Homme
Bulgari BLV Pour Homme
GIVE this Christmas!
Nov 22, 03 - Jan 4, 04
Davidoff Cool Water Woman
Esprit Scents + Senses Gift Set
P1,650
Alyssa Ashley White Musk
P715
Alyssa Ashley Green Tea Gift Set 25 ml
P535
Musical White Bear with Santa Hat
SPECIALS
P149.75
Fluffy Bear with Ribbon 28"
Musical Santa 9"
SPECIALS
P299
Jumbo Softie Lying Dog 21"
SPECIALS
Big Belly Bear
SPECIALS
P269.00
Shaking Monkey with sound 10"
Christmas Animal Stocking
SPECIALS
P69.75
Musical Bear with light-up cheek
P49.75
Ferrero Rocher (assorted shapes)
SPECIALS
P240.75
Hershey's Tin Cans
SPECIALS
M&M Fun Machir Dispenser
SPECIALS
P49.75
Watsons Foot Massager
SPECIALS
Watsons Foot Spa
Water Tube with Santa
Fiber Optic Christmas Tree (2 ft.)
M&M Holiday Chocos
SPECIALS
P162.50
Toblerone
SPECIALS
P29.50
Crem N' Dip 28g
SPECIALS
P14.75
Watsons Facial Sauna
SPECIALS
P799.75
SPECIALS
769.75
Get these Garfield items
P69.00 only
with any purchase
CD HOLDER

# Compare and Save Generics Program

In response to the call for the continuing advocacy of the Generics Act of 1988, Watsons Drug has launched a Compare and Save Generics Program. The program enables a much wider segment of the population - particularly the less advantaged - to enjoy the maximum benefits of quality health products priced within their reach.

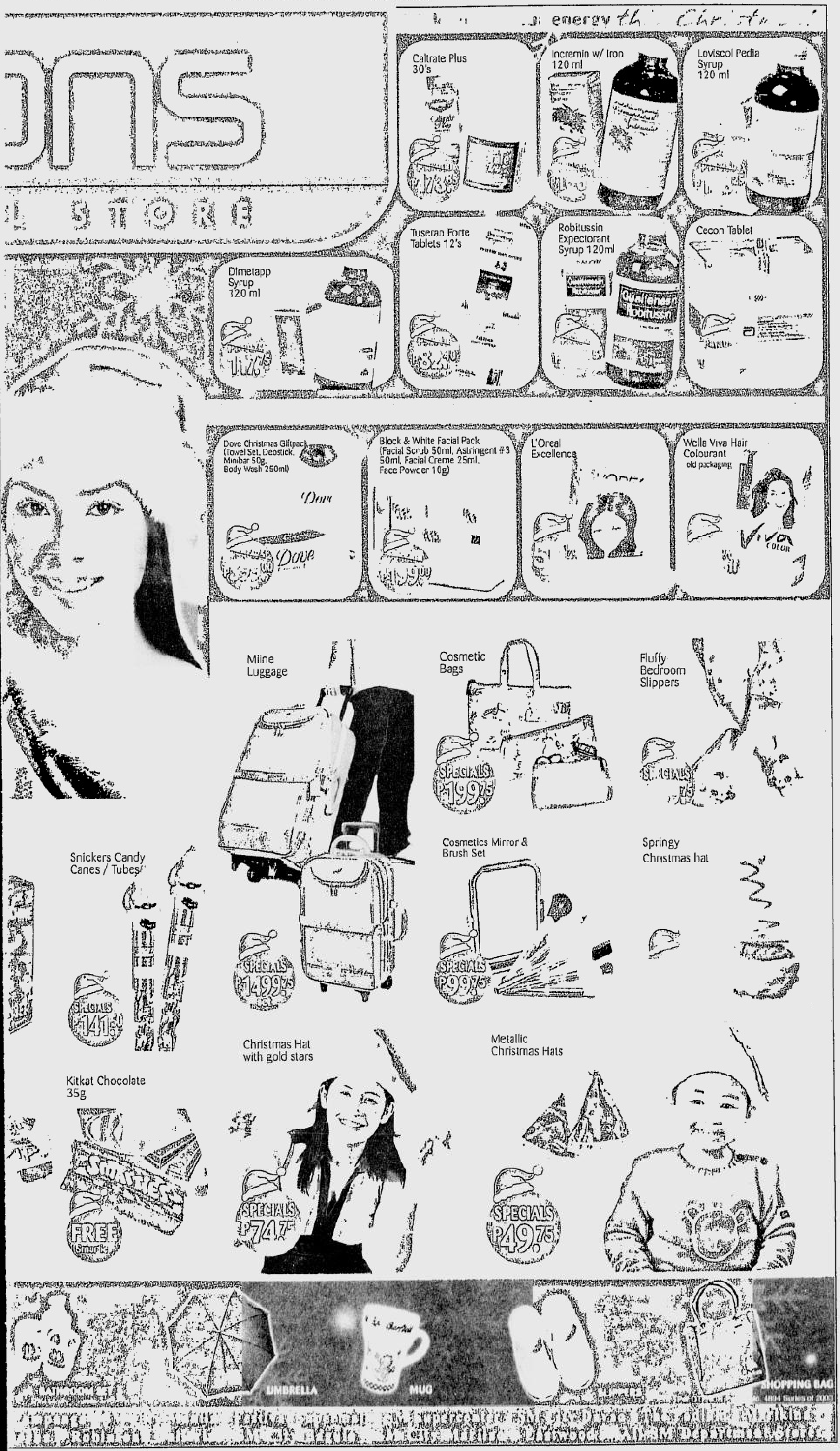


Are generic drugs safe? All drugs, whether sold under their brand names or generic names must pass the same standards set by the Bureau of Food and Drug (BFAD). These standards are: Safety, strength, purity and effectiveness.

In sum, Watsons Drug carries a comprehensive line of generic drugs guaranteed for their purity, freshness and affordability.

## All about the Generic Drug Law

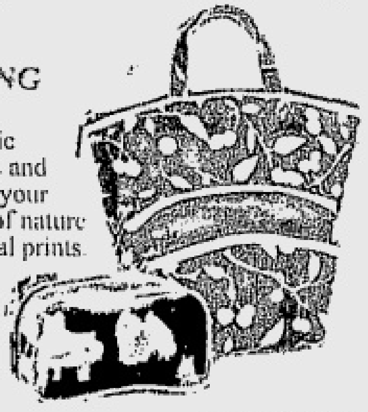
R. A. No. 6675. Otherwise known as the Generic Act of 1988, was passed to ensure that consumers receive substantial savings from using lower priced generic drugs that are therapeutically equivalent to the brand name drugs-in accordance with the prescriptions of their physicians. The generic drugs are expected to behave in the same way in the body as the brand name drugs. The only difference is packaging and price.


STORE
energy
Caltrate Plus 30's
Incremin w/ Iron 120 ml
Loviscol Pedia Syrup 120 ml
Tuseran Forte Tablets 12's
Robitussin Expectorant Syrup 120ml
Cecon Tablet
Dimetapp Syrup 120 ml
Dove Christmas Giftpack (Towel Set, Deostick, Minibar 50g, Body Wash 250ml)
Block & White Facial Pack (Facial Scrub 50ml, Astringent #3 50ml, Facial Creme 25ml, Face Powder 10g)
L'Oreal Excellence
Wella Viva Hair Colourant
old packaging
Miine Luggage
SPECIALS P1499.75
Cosmetic Bags
SPECIALS P199.75
Fluffy Bedroom Slippers
SPECIALS
Snickers Candy Canes / Tubes
SPECIALS P141.50
Cosmetics Mirror & Brush Set
SPECIALS P99.75
Springy Christmas hat
Christmas Hat with gold stars
SPECIALS P74.75
Kitkat Chocolate 35g
FREE Smarties
Metallic Christmas Hats
SPECIALS P49.75
UMBRELLA
MUG
SHOPPING BAG

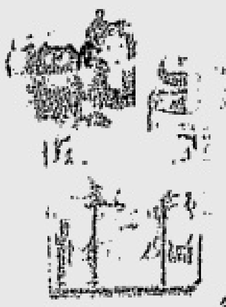
## *H*OLIDAY GIFTABLES

Watsons' Christmas wish list includes an impressive collection of branded fragrances, cosmetics and toiletries available individually or in gift sets.

Several giftables are also available under the Watsons home brand. Meanwhile, a variety of Garfield items are offered at P69 each with any purchase. The holiday special price is good until January 4, 2004 only.

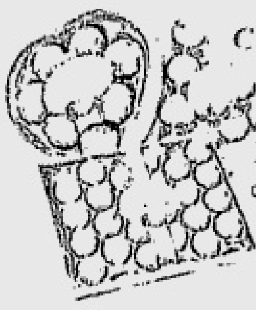


**HAVING FUN**
Cosmetic pouches and totes in your choice of nature or animal prints.



**LOOKING GOOD**
Gift sets under the Watsons home brand in handy plastic cases include bath and shower gels.

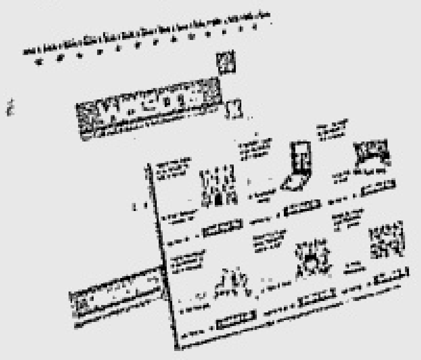
**PLUSH HUGGABLE**
Cuddly huggable Garfield comes in three sizes. Pick one or all for your Christmas list.



**CHOCOLATEY TREATS**
Elegantly packaged Ferrero Rocher chocolates are ideal all-seasons gifting.

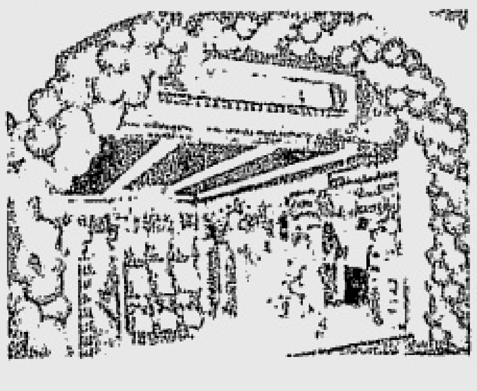
## *A* CALENDAR OF SAVINGS

Watsons' dual purpose 2004 tabletop calendar includes 30 detachable savings coupons redeemable with selected purchases on drug, toiletries and cosmetics. The calendar comes free with a minimum P300 single purchase now through January 15, 2004.

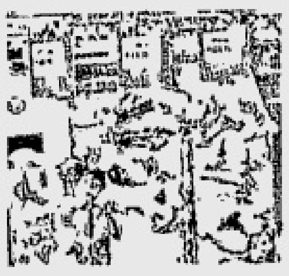


## *N*EIGHBORHOOD STORES

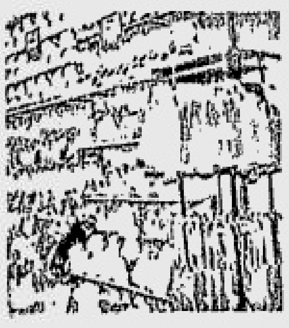
Since its entry into the Philippine retail scene as a joint venture with two members of the SM Group of Companies, Watsons Personal Care Stores, Inc. has achieved significant market penetration in the Greater Metro Manila Area: Luzon (Pampanga, Lucena, Baguio, Marilao), Visayas (Cebu, Iloilo); and Mindanao (Davao, Cagayan De Oro). To date, Watsons has a total of 88 stores nationwide with more to open very soon.



**WATSONS BAGUIO**- Cool choices at cooler prices await shoppers at the newly opened Watsons branch in Baguio City. Photo shows the swirls festooning the entrance during the store's opening last November.



**EASTWOOD**- Free-standing stock bins dominate one section of the aisle area. The bins are filled with Santa hats



**MARILAO**- An [illegible] items under the house brand label fill several layers of wall shelves

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# OPINION

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# Deep in debt

**EDITORIAL**

IT COULD be because it is the political season. But more likely it is because the problem has reached critical proportions that economists have started to raise the alarm about the government's perennial budget deficit and the country's mounting debt.

Days after he resigned as finance secretary, Jose Isidro Camacho declared the Philippines was in a "fiscal crisis." The country's high level of debt could not be sustained, he said, and the resulting loss of confidence in the government's ability to manage its finances has raised the cost of borrowings. The problem, he said, lay basically in the government's failure to implement revenue reforms, with Congress being too slow in passing needed legislation such as the indexation of beer and tobacco taxes and the transformation of the Bureau of Internal Revenue. "Right now, the government doesn't have the means to deal with the present problem," he concluded.

The magnitude of the problem was graphically described earlier by Sen. Ralph Recto. As of August this year, the debt of the national government alone stood at P3.258 trillion. And that debt is increasing tremendously as the government continues to operate on a deficit. Since the previous year, Recto said, that debt has been growing at the rate of P54.2 million an hour or almost P1.3 billion a day. "While we are embroiled in bickering, while our attention is grabbed by political posturing, the debt meter, like a time bomb, ticks away," he warned.

One way to hold down the deficit and keep the debt from mounting is to raise taxes. But as Camacho and other economists have noted, Congress is not quick to oblige. Not in an election year, and not especially if the reform measure will hurt the interests of some generous campaign donors.

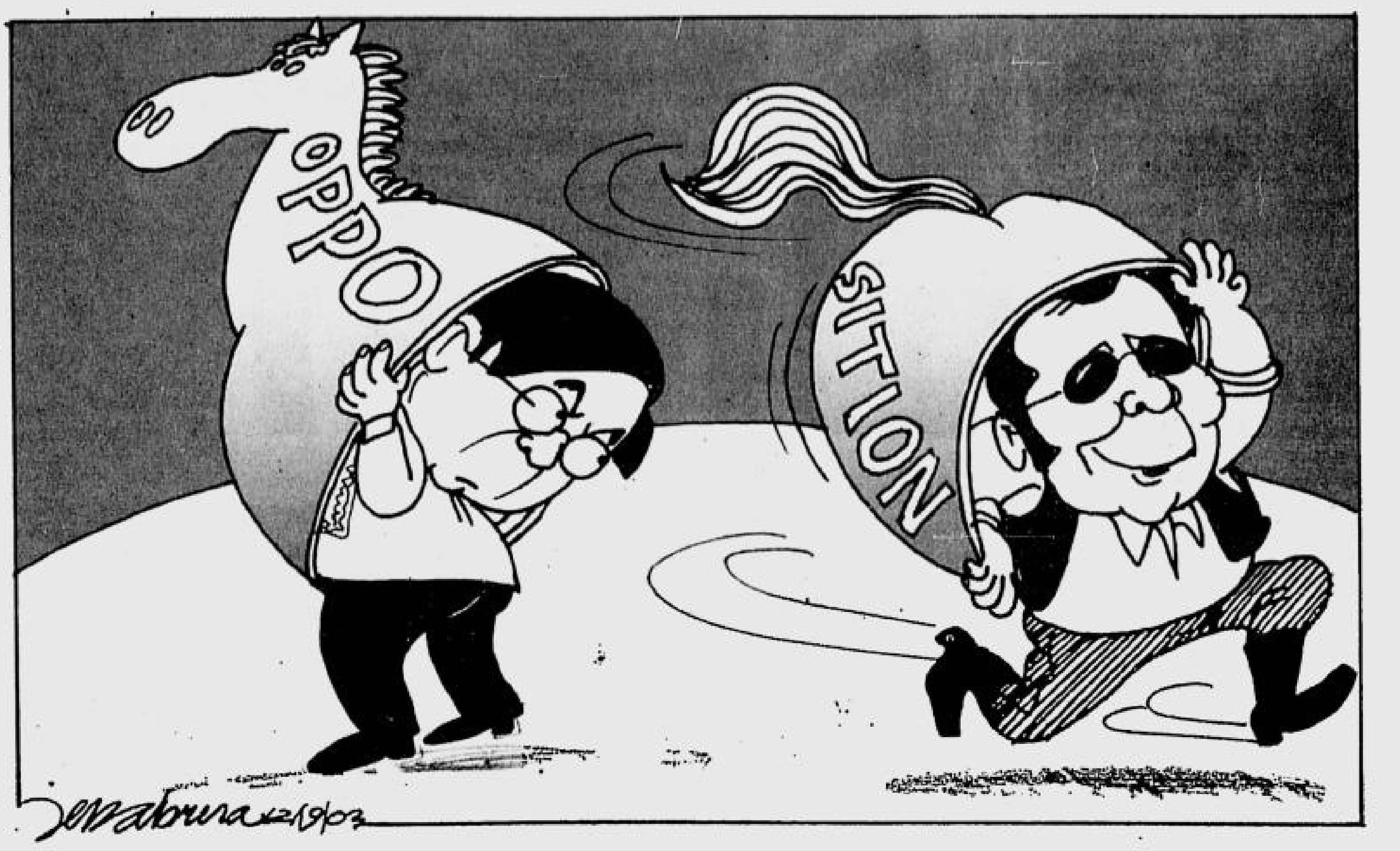
Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri was more direct and specific in blaming Congress and special interest groups for the government's inability to deal with the debt problem. He said big tobacco and alcohol interests made politicians afraid to push for tax legislation that would help narrow the budget deficit. "It is politics that is really bringing us down," he said. "The two most powerful vested interests are affected and the House committee on ways and means has shown that it cannot go against these interests."

The indexation of the so-called "sin taxes" which would raise prices of cigarettes and alcoholic beverages every two years is expected to yield P7 billion. But Neri said this is being opposed by a well-entrenched oligarchy that can influence the outcome of elections. These oligarchs finance the campaign of some politicians to win favors and economic advantages, and these politicians return the favor by sitting on economic reform measures affecting adversely their patrons' interests, completing a "vicious cycle of booty capitalism."

Neri's criticism of Congress prompted one congressman to return the favor by pointing out that Neri, as chief of the Congressional Planning and Budget Office, played a key role in persuading Congress to drop the ad valorem tax on tobacco and alcohol products and shift to a specific tax in 1996. True. But at least Neri is willing to rectify his mistake, after realizing it, while lawmakers choose to stubbornly persist in their error—and not exactly for very honest reasons.

Finger-pointing, however, is not going to make a dent on the country's huge debt or narrow the deficit, which is expected to reach P200 billion this year. Clearly there is need for reforms in the system of taxation and the agencies charged with revenue collection. The measures pending before Congress should help bring revenues a little closer to expenditures. But as the estimated additional revenues would show, even the enactment of all these measures would not keep the country's debts from piling up some more.

It's time the government considered more radical steps, like seeking debt relief. Next year the government will have to set aside P542.2 billion for debt repayment. That's more than half of the national government's budget, and that's money taken away not only from national security and social services but also from education, infrastructure development and other investments that increase the country's productivity. By now, the experiences of counties like Argentina must have taught international financial institutions that squeezing a heavily indebted country doesn't improve its capacity to pay but drives it to bankruptcy.



# Amnesty will prove that crime does pay

**AS I SEE IT**

*Neal H. Cruz*

IT seems President Macapagal-Arroyo is either running scared or getting bad advice. Everything that she does now appears to be politicking in a desperate attempt to pick up votes for herself in next year's elections. The proposal to give amnesty to all those facing charges for offenses against the government is a case in point. The excuse is "national unity," which on the surface seems all right, and although she did not mention them, the beneficiaries will include the Marcoses and Erap. The real reason is obvious: to get the votes of their still sizable followers.

Considering the big number of various groups disenchanted with the present government—besides the Marcoses and Erap and their supporters, they include the communist rebels, the Muslim secessionists, the militant labor groups, the military mutineers, the urban poor, etc.—you can see why giving them amnesty may spell the difference between winning and losing in the coming elections.

It seems like a shrewd move, but it is nevertheless an unscrupulous and shameless one. For it would immediately weaken the government. It would erode further the people's respect for our laws. It would show that one can violate our laws with impunity because when the elections come around, the government will forgive him anyway. That adventurers can try to overthrow the duly constituted government anytime because a reelectionist administration can always give them amnesty in exchange for votes anyway. It would show very clearly that crime pays.

Amnesty for the Muslim and communist rebels may be understandable, for their crimes are political (and a succession of administrations, using enormous amounts of military hardware and even foreign aid, can't defeat them anyway), but forgiveness for grafters and kleptocrats and military adventurers who try to overthrow the government is shameless vote-buying. It is tantamount to bribery.

The crimes of graft and treason should be exempted from an amnesty. For if Congress were to pass the general amnesty bill that the President will certify as "urgent" (urgent because the elections are only a few months away)—and it is likely that Congress will pass it because many of its members are reelectionists hungry for votes—the likes of Imelda Marcos and her cronies will run laughing all the way to the Swiss and other international and local banks and thumb their noses at all of us theft victims.

"To err is human, to forgive divine" may be a nice aphorism to hear, but graft is not simple error. It is intentional. It has malicious intent. Graft is as different from simple error as premeditated murder is different from accidental homicide.

But the GMA-sponsored amnesty bill will not likely have any exemption because it is precisely intended to win the votes of Marcos and Erap supporters who would most surely vote for whoever is the opposition candidate.

How can she ask Brother Eddie Villanueva with a straight face to withdraw his presidential candidacy because she is already addressing his concern to reduce corruption in the country, when she is at the same time proposing to Congress to forgive grafters? Accompanied by former President Fidel V. Ramos and Speaker Jose de Venecia (whose achievement records against graft are far from exemplary) the President met with Villanueva to plead with him not to run for president. (His Jesus is Lord movement allegedly has a voting bloc of five million and GMA would lose those votes if Brother Eddie runs.) Brother Eddie said corruption is getting out of control and his purpose in running is to "dramatically reduce it." He and his flock want a "real, spiritual, moral revolution in the country." Now how can GMA do that if she would pardon grafters?

No, the amnesty ploy won't wash. It is too transparent; the motive is too obvious: it is crass vote buying. Try again.

* * *

**Speaking of opposition candidates, Fernando Poe Jr. will formally accept this Monday the nomination for him to be the presidential standard-bearer of the United Opposition. What happens to Sen. Panfilo Lacson? The rumor is that he would go back to the Senate; he has three more years to serve as senator. It is not likely that he would run for vice president, though a Poe-Lacson tandem may not be a bad compromise.**

**FPJ's most likely running mate—whom he is expected to also identify this Monday—is Sen. Loren Legarda. A good choice. Legarda is popular (she is a Senate topnotcher, just like GMA but without the latter's baggage), is good-looking, very articulate, should have the support of the Lopezes' ABS-CBN, should attract women votes expected to go to GMA and Roco, and the only pro-environment presidential candidate which should clinch the support of the environmental NGOs and the fishermen and farmer organizations.**

**If Lacson accepts a supporting role, that would also be a sensible move. Insisting on running will divide the opposition vote and lead to the victory of GMA. In which case, his persecution will continue. On the other hand, if he helps FPJ win, the new administration will not be so vindictive and Lacson can have a breathing spell. He is still young and there are many more chances to be president. If he performs outstandingly in the remainder of his term in the Senate, winning in the next presidential contest may be a breeze.**

* * *

KAPIHAN NOTES: Guest at Monday's Kapihan sa Manila forum will be none other than APJ—Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr., for those not yet in the know. APJ the presidential candidate will amplify his campaign platform FREEDOM.

# Madness

**THERE'S THE RUB**

*Conrado de Quiros*

ONE is convinced he is the Messiah. That is what he wrote in the box that said, "Occupation," when he filed his presidential candidacy last Monday with the Commission on Elections. He signed his name as N.N.N., though he was known by other names, depending on his manifestation on earth. They include Nanjinaaan Nallalanskyjgodn Narmannahaisn (I hope I did not misspell it) when he appears as a six-star general, and Ace Diamond, when he appears as commander in chief on Earth, sent by God to unite the people.

One insists she is related to George Bush, the lone woman presidential aspirant whose name is Salve Bush. Whether by affinity or consanguinity it is not clear. She told Comelec officials she was engaged to Bush at one point. She wants Loren Legarda to be her running mate. As of this writing, Legarda hadn't yet replied to her invitation.

Another has a plan to abolish poverty, which is dazzling in its simplicity. German Valladarez means to give the unemployed P1 million each in gratuity and the employed P1 million each in bonus each year. His finger sign—elections are an exercise in discovering finger signs, except the raised middle finger—is the joined thumb and forefinger and the three remaining fingers raised to signify money for you and for me.

Doubtless, they will end up only leading the list of candidates for disqualification. The Comelec does that routinely before elections, weeding out the nuisance candidates from the serious ones. Shortly before the last elections in 2001, the Comelec barred a house painter, a jobless man, a musician and a smalltime businessman, among others, from running for president. The house painter and jobless man thought their chosen vocations were just as good as others'. The musician wanted to spread music as a way of reconciling people and spreading peace and prosperity in the country. The businessman believed, like the Messiah above, he was sent by God to unite Christians and Muslims.

They did not have the financial and legal means to challenge the constitutionality of their exclusion, and neither will their counterparts today. But we do have the intellectual and moral means to challenge the logic of it. The criteria for legitimate candidates include having the financial means to run a campaign and having the credibility for it. The first is thoroughly questionable: At the very least, why should poverty be an obstacle to becoming president? At the very most, why should wealth qualify as a good path to it?

There are of course rules on election spending, but they are never followed or enforced. No one has been prosecuted and jailed for violating electoral rules, except Mark Jimenez, and it wasn't in this country, it was in the United States. Despite the fact that Jimenez got his congressional seat by buying votes in his district in Manila. He spent a fortune to get to Jose de Venecia's favorite house, and only extradition evicted him from it. Which is saner—people running for president with or with no money?

Not quite incidentally, one of the funniest things I read was an item in Metro a couple of months ago that said the authorities attributed the rash of bank robberies to elections drawing nigh. The police theorized that politicians were doing it to raise funds for their impending campaigns. What made it achingly funny—the kind where it hurts to laugh—was that it made perfect sense in this country. No one certainly found it odd. No one bothered to ask, if the theory was true, what kind of public officials the bank robbers would make. You spend the fruits of a bank heist to campaign, you expect to profit more when you win. Clearly, robbing the country is more lucrative than robbing a bank.

As to sanity, which is what credibility really means in this case, asking the Comelec to rule on who are sane and who are mad is like asking the blind to lead the blind. Ask yourself if there is anything sane in this: The Comelec rules on bidding for automated canvassing are that the bidder should have an outstanding record over three years and his machines should comply with a 99 accuracy rate. Benjamin Abalos awarded the contract to a company that was just formed this year and whose machines failed to comply with the accuracy test. The Comelec should weed out the nuisance candidates? We should weed out the nuisance Comelec!

As to the candidates themselves, who is more loony tunes, N.N.N. who forthrightly admits to his occupation as messiah or FPJ who more coyly uses his roles in the movies to suggest exactly the same thing? Both not quite incidentally say as well they are going to unite Christians and Muslims, N.N.N. in his role as Ace Diamond and FPJ in his role as Ang Panday. Who is more loony tunes, Salve Bush who claims she is related to Bush and was engaged to Bush at one point or GMA who knows she is related to Bush and has been engaged to Bush since 9/11. The only difference between them is that GMA does not want Loren for running mate. Ask yourself as well if Loren is not becoming as weird as the creatures above.

We like to think that between Ferdinand and Imelda, Imelda was hands-down the certified flake. But who was really more loony tunes, Imelda who tried to transform Olot by covering it with white sand airlifted from Australia, or Ferdinand who tried to transform dictatorship by covering it with legal gobbledygook lifted from God knows where? Who was more loony tunes, Imelda who tried to alter her past by inventing an ancestral mansion and an illustrious ancestry, or Ferdinand who tried to alter the country's past by inventing a history with himself as its apotheosis?

There is madness and madness, there is nuisance and nuisance. Some madness is madder than others. Some nuisances are more nuisance than others.

# How to tell the world of Saddam's capture

**NEWS ANALYSIS**

*Jim Mannion*

WASHINGTON—Long before Saddam Hussein's humiliating capture, US officials had spent time thinking through how they would break the news to the world. Whether Saddam was taken dead or alive, the development was set to have huge implications.

But no one could have anticipated how Iraq's ex-dictator was finally picked up by US troops who found him in a hole in the ground, looking old, unkempt, bewildered, tired and with no fight left in him.

Nor could they have asked for Saddam to give out to the world a more devastating image of weakness and failure, as his three decades as one of the world's most feared men was finally brought to a close.

"In the last analysis he seemed not terribly brave," said US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld in a televised interview late Sunday. Rumsfeld said US forces had orders to capture Saddam, or kill him if he could not be taken alive.

"But it was something that the facts on the ground were determined, and we were prepared for it either way and had thought through what might be the appropriate circumstance in each case," Rumsfeld told CBS television.

Pentagon officials said they had worked up normal public affairs plans for a range of scenarios, recognizing that whatever end Saddam met would be of extraordinary importance.

The planning consisted of figuring out ahead of time who would be notified, and when, where, by whom and in what sequence the news would be released to the media, according to Pentagon officials.

The New York Times reported that President George W. Bush approved a plan, drawn up by the press officers at the Coalition Provisional Authority in Baghdad and codenamed "HVT-1", for "High Value Target-1." A senior Pentagon official, speaking on condition of anonymity, rebuffed the notion of a finely calibrated "playbook" that would reap maximum mileage from the capture in the Arab world, and elsewhere.

"That gives us a degree of sophistication that isn't warranted," he said.

Nevertheless, US and coalition officials believed that a key to convincing Iraqis and the larger Arab public that Saddam had been captured would be video images of him in custody.

"Images tend to be much more important in the Arab world. They're much more literal than here," the official said.

When Saddam's sons Uday and Qusay were killed July 22 in a shootout with US troops, widespread public skepticism in Iraq forced coalition officials in Baghdad to show the press their mangled corpses with gruesomely reconstructed faces.

Images of Saddam were selected that showed him being treated in a professional manner in keeping with Geneva Convention rules on the treatment of prisoners of war, the official said.

"We were careful not to show photographs that were humiliating, insulting or that held him up to public ridicule," he said.

The images—a bearded Saddam being checked for head lice and having his mouth examined by a military doctor—were powerful nonetheless, reinforcing the picture of a beaten man that emerged in the US military's description of his capture.

The picture was completed with a Baghdad press conference on Sunday at which an eruption of cheers, applause and Iraqi reporters shouting "Death to Saddam" greeted the announcement of the former Iraqi president's capture.

Some 19 hours had elapsed between the time US troops seized him at a farm south of Tikrit on Saturday night local time and the news conference, giving officials the luxury of having some time to refine their plans.

"It's a basic tenet of public affairs," said the senior defense official. "It has to do with speed versus accuracy and having the appropriate balance." A major concern was making sure the prisoner was actually Saddam and not one of his doubles.

Meanwhile, a small circle of aides in Washington were alerted.

Bush learned of Saddam's capture at around 3:15 p.m. (2015 GMT) Saturday in a telephone call from Rumsfeld, who cautioned the president that first reports were often unreliable.

Top officials in on the secret then made the rounds of Washington Christmas parties as if nothing was up.

NBC television anchor Tim Russert recounted that he ran into CIA director George Tenet at a party and told him he had dreamed the night before that Saddam had been captured.

"Happy holidays, Tim," Tenet responded, by Russert's on-air account.

Shortly after 5 a.m. (1000 GMT) Sunday, the president received confirmation from National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice that they indeed had Saddam in custody.

But news of the capture had leaked a few minutes earlier. The Iranian news agency IRNA was the first to report it, citing Kurdish leader Jalal Talabani as its source.

The leak came not long after members of the Iraqi Governing Council were taken to see Saddam as part of the process of identifying him and notifying Iraqi authorities. *AFP*

# Senators and the freedom to fly

**AT LARGE**

*Rina Jimenez-David*

RECENTLY, reports came out in the media on the demand of Senators Tito Sotto and Joker Arroyo (one of the rare times they find themselves on the same side of an issue) that Transportation and Communications Secretary Leandro Mendoza fire a certain Alberto Lim from the Civil Aeronautics Board, accusing Lim of being a lackey of foreign airlines and interests.

The senators have even threatened to hold the passage of the DOTC's budget unless Mendoza gave in to their demand for Lim's head.

Who is this Alberto Lim and why has he earned the ire of senators on both sides of the political demarcation line?

Lim is better known in civil society circles as "Bertie" Lim, a businessman involved in tourism (El Nido resorts, the last I heard), who was also quite active in the anti-Marcos protest movement and served as an adviser to Alran Bengzon during the bases negotiations. It was during this time that Lim proved his mettle as a patriot, to the point that he was viewed as the primary "nemesis" of the Americans in the Filipino panel.

Which is why it's quite an irony that Lim should now be accused of selling out Philippine interests in favor of foreign governments and airlines in his role as a member of the four-man CAB board.

In an open letter to friends, Lim attempts to explain the senators' animosity:

"They claim my being a founding member of the Freedom to Fly Coalition (true), an advocacy group pushing for the liberalization of our country's civil aviation (true), makes me an agent of foreign interests (untrue), just because certain other members of the coalition were hired by a USAID-funded group called Agile (true), which has engaged Filipino Ph.D.s and other Filipino experts to do the research work behind our reform legislation for the past 50 years. In the first place, I have never been hired by Agile nor have I ever been on their roster of consultants."

* * *

**IN HIS letter, Lim says that it is really Philippine Airlines that has been working behind the scenes for his resignation "since last March" because it has been unhappy, to say the least, with Lim's resistance to toeing the PAL line in most CAB discussions and decisions. "In spite of being a minority of one," writes Lim, "I have been able to argue my case such that the majority are scared to vote according to the way PAL wants them to on certain critical issues."**

**Lim asserts that the country's national interest is being sacrificed to save what he calls a "dying airline." "PAL is technically bankrupt as it carries (more than) P28 billion (as of 2002) in accumulated foreign exchange losses as an asset in its books," he claims. "By 2005, international accounting standards will force PAL to write this down. Will Lucio Tan come up with $500 million to save PAL?"**

**While PAL continues to enjoy preferential treatment from aviation authorities and policymakers, the rest of the airline and tourism industry, and the entire country suffers, Lim declares. "Tourism cannot grow because PAL does not want our country's frequencies to grow since it cannot expand its fleet accordingly. So jobs in tourism and related industries are not created. We are being left behind. Vietnam tourism which started only in 1997 has already overtaken us. Other Filipino airlines (like Cebu Pacific) cannot grow. Our OFW's have had to wait three months to get a ride to their work destinations. Trade cannot expand if there is not enough cargo capacity in the bellies of our passenger aircraft. And for what do we exchange these? To save 8,000 jobs at PAL? No, to save the $200 million investment in PAL of Lucio Tan, one of the richest men in the country."**

* * *

BERTIE Lim says he feels he has done his work as best he could at CAB and is prepared to "move on," should higher authorities bow to the political pressure.

So far, though, even as they have already called for his resignation, Senators Sotto and Arroyo have yet to invite Lim to any hearing on aviation matters, especially in the implementation of the "open skies" policy.

In all the time that I've been writing on the struggle to really "open" Philippine skies not just to foreign carriers but to other local airlines aside from PAL, a common theme has emerged from those who choose to view the issue from the viewpoint of PAL's interests. And that is to equate the "national interest" with the interest of PAL, claiming that as the "national carrier," PAL should enjoy not just advantages or preferential treatment but in fact, utter dominance and sole hegemony over Philippine skies.

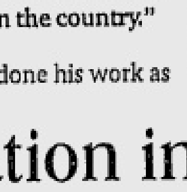
One of the reasons Thailand enjoys such a booming tourism business, it's been pointed out, is that Bangkok has become a "hub" for international airlines. It's so convenient to book flights into and out of Bangkok, that the Don Muang airport is often used as a transit or transfer site to fly to any country in the world.

By contrast, the Philippines has such a restrictive aviation policy, one tied to the capacity of PAL to operate reciprocal routes, as Lim pointed out, that only a few airlines can come into the country. Fewer flights translate into fewer tourists. That's why it's such a hassle even for Filipinos to book flights out of the Philippines, as the experiences of overseas workers in the Middle East have shown.

One of the arguments raised by PAL's partisans is that if bigger foreign airlines are allowed to operate out of the country, they would drive PAL and other Filipino airlines to ruin as they would start "poaching" passengers from them. Quite apart from the weakness of this argument from the economic standpoint, it must also be argued that choosing what airline to fly is a right of every citizen, even of Filipinos. No matter how PAL puts it, every Filipino still enjoys, or should enjoy, the "freedom to fly."

# Miscommunication in art

**LOOKING BACK**



*Ambeth R. Ocampo*

SAINT Nicholas of Bari, 4th century Bishop of Myra, is supposed to have saved three young girls from prostitution or becoming spinsters by paying for their dowry. He bought their future with three bags of gold and is thus depicted in art holding three bags or three golden balls. But then the message sometimes gets garbled in transmission so these three bags were mistaken for three small heads resulting in a new legend. According to another story, Saint Nicholas is supposed to have discovered a wicked inn-keeper who had murdered three children and stored the corpses in brine. This was probably the urban legend of the 4th century and one wouldn't be surprised if it is embellished to have the enterprising inn-keeper passing off the cured meat as *pindang damulag* to innocent and hungry travelers. St. Nicholas touched the children in a brine tub and brought them back to life. Thus, Nicholas of Bari has since become the Patron of Children.

The above miscommunication in art is common. Another example is St. Agatha, virgin and martyr. Like most martyrs she was tortured—beating, whipping, etc., all this was common. What set her apart was that her breasts were cut off. Of course, she was miraculously cured but due to the variety of torture she endured for her faith she eventually died in prison. Such are the gory details one finds while reading the lives of the saints. In art, St. Agatha is depicted carrying her severed breasts on a platter and is invoked against breast diseases. Over time these luscious pieces of flesh served on a plate were mistaken (perhaps intentionally by the pious and prude) for loaves of bread or bells thus, St. Agatha, virgin and martyr, also is the patron of bakers and bellmakers. Special loaves of bread (what shape?) are sometimes blessed on her feast, Feb. 5, and distributed to the faithful; we shall see the same practice for St. Nicholas of Tolentino in the Philippines.

Contrary to popular belief, St. Nicholas, the original Santa Claus, is not Nicholas of Tolentino but Nicholas of Bari. As the patron of children there was a practice in Germany, Switzerland and the Netherlands to give presents to children in his name at Christmas. The custom crossed the Atlantic into the United States brought by Dutch Protestants (not Catholics) to New Amsterdam (later called New York), where the name of Saint Nicholas became Sint Klaes or Sant Klaas into later Santa Claus. So the 4th century miracle-working Bishop of Bari lost his church robes in the 19th century and transformed into the fat bearded man in a red suit and cap who travels in a flying sled pulled by reindeer. Even his residence moved from the East to the North Pole.

San Nicolas de Tolentino (1245-1305) venerated in many places in the Philippines, administered by Augustinians and Recollects, celebrates his feast annually on Sept. 10. The story is that his middle-aged parents went on a pilgrimage to the shrine of Nicolas of Bari and was blessed with a son they naturally named Nicholas. The saint became an Augustinian and spent time in a place called Tolentino, hence Nicolas de Tolentino. He was famous as a preacher and a miracle worker.

In his old age, San Nicolas continued to fast and abstain from meat even if he was ill. He was advised to eat a bit more or perhaps to take some meat, but the saint felt this was giving in to the whims of his body and refused. It is said that the Virgin Mary appeared to him in a vision and told him to take some bread dipped in water so he would regain his health. He obeyed and got well, so he started blessing bread and advised sick people to eat this dipped in water thus, originated the custom of blessing St. Nicholas' bread on his feast and distributing this to the sick. In the Philippines, more specifically in Pampanga and adjoining areas, the bread is an arrowroot cookie, brown or golden, it comes round or leaf-shaped and has the image of the saint embossed on it.

The Pan de San Nicolas or Panecillos de San Nicolas or plain *Saniculas* shows the saint wearing his Augustinian habit holding a plate with a bird. The legend is that during one illness the saint continued to fast and abstain from meat so he was advised to lay off his mortification till he recovered his strength. Naturally, he refused so his superior invoked his vow of obedience and ordered the saint to eat some meat. He was then served a roast partridge better known in the Philippines through that repetitious Christmas song "Partridge in a pear tree." This little bird is more popularly known under its Filipino name "*pugo*." So the roasted bird was brought to the saint who touched it and brought it back to life.

So the bird flew away to be captured and eaten another day but the saint has since been depicted in art and in these cookies holding a bird on a plate.

How the two saints named Nicolas got confused with Santa Claus is a long and confusing story made clear by art. It is unfortunate that so much art, legend, literature and custom are lost to those who do not know or recognize the symbols in Catholic iconography. Our churches are full of plaster saints so modern and sweet they would give you diabetes just gazing upon them. Older churches reveal much more for those who take time to find meaning in Catholic symbols.

* * *

*Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu*

# Praying

**HIGH BLOOD**

*Naty Lapuz-Templo*

*WE'D also like to know the concerns of the sixtysomething and above, what makes their blood pressure rise or makes them sit back, content that all's well with their world and with themselves.* —Ed.

"DON'T ever give up. Pray. It works."

This message is displayed prominently on the side of a pedestrian overpass somewhere along Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City. It makes you think kindly of the official who had it painted there, don't you agree? What a comforting thought that he or she did not succumb to the temptation of trumpeting who was responsible for erecting the overpass so that his or her name would be perpetuated or at least remembered until next election time.

As a motorist, you will find the warning most appropriate—and you had better heed it—when your fellows, particularly impetuous bus drivers and jeepney drivers, block your path as they stop wherever they please to load and unload passengers. Don't start blowing your horn incessantly, or shouting at them with "*Hoy, tanga, huwag sa gitna ng karsada ka magbaba ng pasahero mo* (Hey, dummy, don't let your passengers off in the middle of the highway)!" Refrain from cursing them and wishing the deadliest lightning to strike them (all of which are futile by the way and bad for your blood pressure, besides).

Instead, direct your thoughts heavenward like a peace-loving, albeit exasperated and helpless, human being. Try praying for those annoying brethren. And don't grit your teeth while doing so—that would be counterproductive—but be charitable and kind. Maybe you can implore the Lord to "reform these dangerous drivers; may they learn basic road courtesy."

If you recall your catechism, this was how the intense and disturbed Saul was converted to Christianity and eventually became St. Paul. It is said that Stephen, a devoted Christ-follower, was responsible for this dramatic conversion. As he was being stoned and lay dying at the feet of Saul, Stephen prayed fervently, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them" (meaning his tormentors, principally Saul who was presiding over his stoning). As the story goes, the Lord later manifested Himself to Saul and confronted him with the plaintive question, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?" And thus began Saul's 180-degree turnaround; the rest, as they say, is history.

I must confess, though, that when I ride a bus or a jeepney driven by a maniacal, speed-obsessed driver, I forget to practice what I am preaching here. Well, unless you consider the following thoughts as prayerful, "*Diyos ko! Hulihin sana ng* MMDA *ang walang hiyang* driver *na ito* (My God! I wish the MMDA people would apprehend this shameless driver)!"

Why is it that we tend to pray only in times of distress and need? During a strong earthquake in the late 1980s my officemates and I loudly recited bits and fragments of "Our Father" (alas, without finishing the prayer), as we sought protection under our tables and desks. The fear of walls and ceilings crashing over our heads was so overpowering that we concentrated more on saving our skins than begging Heaven's forgiveness for our sins.

In my experience, repetitive positive prayers are always answered. Early in my marriage, I prayed daily for a baby, and did not give up until I got one, seven and a half years later. The Divine Giver must have regarded me a favored petitioner and worthy of a "bonus," for after my first, He granted me six more pregnancies—in rapid succession yet. Unfortunately, I lost four of them from complications. Still, I am thankful for the three who have survived.

To be sure, prayer teaches one to be patient and humble. Even in this age of instant this and instant that, we should not expect a quick response to our petition. It pays to be *makulit* (persistent).

It helps too if you offer some services or sacrifices to strengthen your plea, such as "I'll give up my *meriendas* (snacks) this week for a favorable answer to my prayer." This works for mortals after all.

Like most kids, I learned my first prayers from my deeply religious mother. Every night after dinner, she would gather the entire family (which included an assortment of elderly aunts, cousins and house helpers) before the holy images to pray the rosary. We had to stop whatever we were doing in order to participate in this group devotional. While she led the prayers in a mixture of Spanish and Latin, my siblings, cousins, and I would respond in English or Pampango. Our houseboy, a Bicolano, found it convenient to reply in his native tongue. Even if our prayers were a cacophony of languages and dialects, we were sure that the Almighty understood. I imagined Him smiling indulgently as someone struggled with his "*Sicut erat…*" to my mother's "*Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritu Santo.*"

Midway in our prayers, our voices would be barely audible, for not a few would already be nodding drowsily. To jolt us back to wakefulness, my mother would pinch an arm here or pull a sleeve there. Suddenly someone, momentarily recovered from a lingering stupor, would answer with renewed energy, "Pray for us," although we were not yet reciting the Litany. We suppressed our giggles as valiantly as we could and sometimes we made excuses to go to the bathroom just so we could let loose a torrent of forbidden laughter.

Sometimes it was my mother herself who was responsible for the interruptions. Hurrying through her "*Dios te salve,*" she would turn to the houseboy and say, "Ben, go and check whether the back door has been locked securely." or "Did you cover the food on the stove?" (In those days about half a dozen cats from the neighborhood were in the habit of stealing into our house and raiding our kitchen.) I do not know why we kids found such interruptions extremely funny, and we were ready to collapse again in laughter, if not for the stern look of our elders.

These days, the widely diverse work and social schedules of my family make it difficult for us to pray together. But in our individual ways, wherever we are, whatever we are doing, we continue to seek divine guidance, blessings and favors.

I am sure the Lord listens to everybody's prayers, whether they are conventional or "homemade," as long as they are recited with faith and sincerity. While praying for ourselves, we are told to pray for our fellowmen as well. Pope St. Gregory I said, "He causes his prayers to be of more avail to himself, who offers them also for others."

This morning when I looked, the sign on the pedestrian overpass that I mentioned at the beginning of this piece had been partly hidden by a banner announcing an obscure project undertaken by an equally obscure councilor. So I find it expedient now to pray for that city official in our district, "Lord, would that the thoughtless councilor move his banner some place else where it won't cover the reminder for Your faithful people to not ever give up, but to pray." Amen.

---

*Naty Lapuz-Templo is retired from the government service. As she advances in age, she gravitates more and more toward the church.*

The INQUIRER is a member of the
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# Prominence, pedigree carry much weight

I THOUGHT that Kris Aquino's bad judgment was confined only to matters of the heart. If indeed reports are accurate that she is inclined to support the United Opposition presidential candidate in 2004, who may either be Sen. Panfilo Lacson or Fernando Poe Jr., then her penchant for making bad judgments has in fact been extended to her political choices as well. If eventually she decides to support an opposition candidate, is she then prepared to share the political stage with the likes of Juan Ponce Enrile, Francisco Tatad, Imee Marcos and the rest of the martial law gang who are expected to be on the opposition senatorial ticket?

An intelligent lady with a revered political legacy, she should consider benchmarks such as competence, capability, character, credentials among other factors in her choice of presidential candidate. More importantly, she should have a "sense of history." In endorsing a candidate, her prominence and pedigree carry much weight and much responsibility.

**—FERDIE T. SIBAL,**
**18 Green Leaves St.,**
**Capitol Green Village,**
**Tandang Sora, Quezon City**

## Motivate toward action

AS the lyrics of a song in "Miss Saigon" says: "this is a sign of what we (in the government) have failed to do."

Many of our leaders in government are very good in issuing motherhood statements to exhort its citizenry to work for the common good. Fine, but most of our leaders lose their credibility because of neglect in providing the citizenry at least the basic motivations to respond to their call.

One effective motivation for teachers to stay in an institution is to help them in the education of their children or relatives in their care, even if their basic pay is not so high. This could be done through grants of full or partial scholarships to their children or close relatives. And other scholarships could be given those who take education courses, with some sort of agreement to serve in government schools for a minimum period after graduation.

Our leaders would be able to encourage people to serve the country, by providing for the basic needs of the citizenry to live with dignity. Otherwise, we shall continue wasting and losing one of our most vital resources as a nation—our own people.

**—BIEN VILLAPANDO,**
**bsv@mmpci.com**

## Revoke authority of Meralco to raise rates

THE FREEDOM from Debt Coalition calls upon the Energy Regulatory Commission to immediately revoke the provisional authority granted to Meralco, allowing it to raise its rates by 12 centavos/kWh starting January 2004.

The ERC must not make a mockery of the processes especially pertaining to rates adjustment. Most of all, the regulatory agency must not be subservient to the propensity of utilities for asking for a provisional rate increase at the expense of the consuming public.

The FDC observed that the ERC often grants provisional relief in favor of utilities to the detriment of consumers. Often, the provisional relief is a *fait accompli* because the final decision is almost always the same as the provisional authority.

The ERC has jumped the gun on consumers when it allowed Meralco to raise its rates. Prior to the release of the ERC's order, the FDC, together with other consumer groups, has filed a motion at the commission asking Meralco to produce certain documents to support its petition. The ERC chose to prioritize granting relief to Meralco over acting on the consumers' legitimate requests.

On the other hand, consumers are not impressed with the ERC's assurance that it will order a refund if the ERC finds, after the completion of the hearings, that the rate adjustment is unjust and unreasonable. Until this time, Meralco has yet to complete the refund of more than P30 billion that the Supreme Court ordered returned to consumers. Meralco even claims that the court-ordered refund has exacerbated cash flow problems, prompting the need to raise its rates.

Thus, the FDC demands that the ERC immediately revokes its order granting Meralco the provisional authority to increase its rates. The FDC further demands that a thorough public scrutiny over Meralco's claims be conducted. These claims, particularly the 42 expansion projects, should be thoroughly examined and checked whether or not they are indeed necessary for its efficient service. Meralco should not be allowed to finance its capital expenditures from rate increases.

**—LIDY B. NACPIL,**
**secretary general,**
**Freedom from Debt Coalition,**
**34 Matiaga St., Central District,**
**Quezon City**

## Abaya's words on Abus' end misinterpreted

I AM writing this rejoinder to the editorial "Unfinished business." (PDI, 12/10/03) I wish to clarify an issue concerning the Armed Forces of the Philippines which we consider as a misinterpretation of the real message.

I would like to give particular attention to your reading of the statement of AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Narciso L. Abaya, that with the fall of Galib Andang the Abu Sayyaf problem has been solved. This is not what Abaya wanted to stress in his statement. He was merely pointing out that of the original 13 Abu Sayyaf members involved in the Sipadan hostage-taking, five have already been neutralized including Mujib Susukan and Andang.

The statement did not in any way mean that the Abu Sayyaf problem is already totally solved. In fact, Abaya has ordered AFP units deployed in the Abu Sayyaf-affected areas to intensify their operations against the notorious group and exploit the gains that the AFP has achieved as a result of the capture of Andang.

**—DANIEL A. LUCERO (GSC) PA,**
**chief, Public Information Office,**
**Camp Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo,**
**Quezon City**

## Notorious political turncoat in Sorsogon

I PROTEST and deplore the grand misinformation of the notorious Sorsogon KBL cum LDP Gov. Raul R. Lee in his radio interview at dzMS and dzRS last Sept. 2, 2003. In that radio interview, he bragged that the Lakas provincial chairmanship in Sorsogon was being offered to him since last year. Funny, why he thanks President Macapagal-Arroyo only now by accepting the chairmanship of Lakas in Sorsogon. I hope and pray that the Lakas officials especially Secretary General Nani Perez, would not accept Lee to Lakas, for it will surely deharmonize the existing organizational setup of the Lakas coalition in Sorsogon.

The old goat can never learn. Since time immemorial, this politician has had nothing in mind but deception. This time around he gathered Sorsogon mayors and other elected officials at a party he threw to make them believe that he is now the Lakas Party chair in Sorsogon.

He even made sure a few members of the Lakas secretariat, who were then on their way to Masbate, not Sorsogon, were present at the party in his in residence at Barangay Bibincahan, Sorsogon City. However, he made the announcement of his being the provincial chair after his Lakas guests had left. *Talagang manloloko!* The truth is that the incumbent congressman of the 2nd district of Sorsogon, Jose G. Solis, remains the Sorsogon provincial chair of the Lakas Party. In a recent check with the Lakas-NUCD party headquarters, a senior staff there reiterated that there has been no change in the Lakas hierarchy, particularly in the province.

Another lie peddled by Lee is that he was never a notorious *balimbing*. Lee claims that he will never transfer from one political party to another. This is simply hogwash! For those who don't know, Lee is a die-hard KBL. After Edsa I, he immediately transferred to his cockfighting buddy Peping Cojuangco's LDP. And again, in 1998, he transferred to Lamp. And now, he is singing a different tune.

He should really stop fooling the people of Sorsogon, especially its political leaders, lest it boomerangs against his own political aspirations.

In 1995, former Rep. Bonifacio Gillego and the eight-term Gov. Juan G. Frivaldo, exposed Lee as a "notorious *jueteng* operator and maintainer" in the Congressional Committee on Good Government. I can only hope and pray that Interior Secretary Jose Lina would look into this seven-year-old case against Lee.

If ever he succeeds in his efforts to move over to Lakas, the coalition in our province would weaken and this could affect the chances of the Lakas titular head in the elections of 2004.

The acceptance of Lee into the coalition through Lakas or via other means will not sit well with us in our fight against graft and corruption.

**—NORBERTO FORTES,**
**Blk. 11, Lot 25,**
**Phase 1, Our Lady's Village,**
**Barangay Pangpang,**
**Sorsogon 4700**

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# Group sues GMA to stop jailing of young offenders

**By Allan Macatuno**
*PDI Central Luzon Desk*

**OLONGAPO CITY—Officials of the People's Recovery, Empowerment and Development Assistance (Preda) Foundation here have filed before the Ombudsman charges of "crime against humanity" against President Macapagal-Arroyo and other officials on Dec. 10.**

Preda officials said they filed the 50-page complaint on behalf of all child prisoners in the country. The filing of the case was timed for the commemoration of International Human Rights Day last week.

Five victims of police detention, aged 11 to 17, urged the Ombudsman to charge Ms Macapagal, Philippine National Police chief Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr., Local Government Secretary Jose Lina Jr. and Justice Secretary Simeon Datumanong with crimes against humanity for jailing children with adult prisoners "with impunity."

The children represented child prisoners in different parts of the country, Preda said.

"Thousands of children, some as young as 12, see the inside of a Philippine prison in any given year. They are condemned without due process or respect for their legal and human rights and subsist in subhuman conditions on P30 a day," Preda officials said in a statement.

The children decried the alleged tattooing, rape and torture inflicted on them by adult prisoners. The children also accused policemen of torturing and sexually molesting them while in custody.

## Deprivation

The complaint said during detention, the children were deprived "of their fundamental right to gain direct and immediate access to legal, medical, psychological, health, and social services and assistance."

According to 16-year-old Rex, an out-of-school youth, he was arrested for vagrancy and for sniffing solvent. Rex said he was not given a separate detention cell but was put in a cell for adult detainees.

He told the INQUIRER that the adult inmates maltreated him.

Remsy, 18, related the same experience while in detention in a police jail in Metro Manila.

He said he was harassed by adult prisoners and was unfairly treated by jail guards. He said he was deprived of adequate food, water, clothing and bed while in detention.

Remsy, a former street child, was detained for solvent abuse.

Both Rex and Remsy are in the custody of the Preda Foundation here.

Preda, quoting their records, said other children were beaten up, subjected to electric shock and threatened by policemen.

"This is the root cause of the crime in the Philippines, the maltreatment and abuse of children. Who is responsible if not the government? They must answer for it. They must act now to change the system," the Preda statement said.

## Stop abuse

The Coalition to Stop Child Detention Through Restorative Justice, which is composed of at least 24 organizations nationwide, also urged the Ombudsman to order Ms Macapagal and her top officials to immediately stop the abuse of juvenile detainees.

The coalition asked the government to turn over arrested children to the custody of social workers or responsible members of the community.

"Ms Macapagal cannot hide behind the cloak of state immunity from suit since her administration's institutionalized practice of jailing kids with adults constitutes a crime against humanity," the coalition said in a separate statement.

The group asked Ms Macapagal to enforce Section 8 of the Child and Youth Welfare Code, which mandates lawmen to consult with social workers upon the arrest of children and order their release to the custody of the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

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# NGAYON LANG!

## Napa
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SI President GLORIA at Tourism Secretary DICK GORDON sa waterfalls, sa Villa Escudero, Tiaong, Quezon

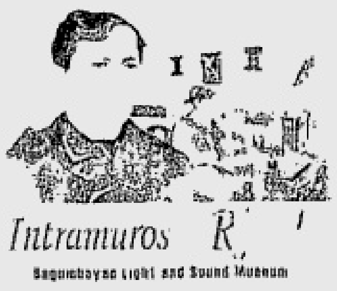
### ANG PROBLEMA

Dahil sa sunod-sunod na kidnapping, pagbobomba, kudeta, at SARS outbreak, natakot ang mga turista, dayuhan man o Pinoy, na bumisita sa ating bansa kung saan patuloy na naghihikahos ang industriya ng turismo.

### A[illegible]N NI PRESIDENT GLORIA

- Alinsunod sa kanyang 8-point agenda, inatasan ni President GLORIA ang Department of Tourism (DOT) na buhayin ang turismo sa bansa.
- Sa pakikipag-isa ng DOT sa pangunguna ni Secretary DICK GORDON, Local Government Units (LGUs), Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), at pribadong sector, matagumpay na naipatupad ang mga malaking proyekto tulad ng:
  - WOW PHILIPPINES INTRAMUROS - Dumalo ang 16 na rehiyon ng Pilipinas sa Manila upang ipakita ang pinakamaganda at pinakamahusay sa kanilang turismo, kultura, kasaysayan, tugtugin at sayaw, pagkain, at pista.

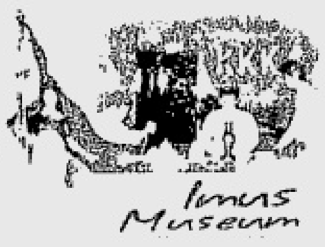
  - BAGUMBAYAN LIGHT AND SOUND. MUSEUM - Isang bagong museyo sa Intramuros tungkol sa ating kasaysayan at kay Dr. Jose Rizal. Hinihimok tayo nito na wasakin ang mga pader sa ating kaisipan upang umaksyon bilang isang bayan na matatag at malaya.


Intramuros R
Bagumbayan Light and Sound Museum

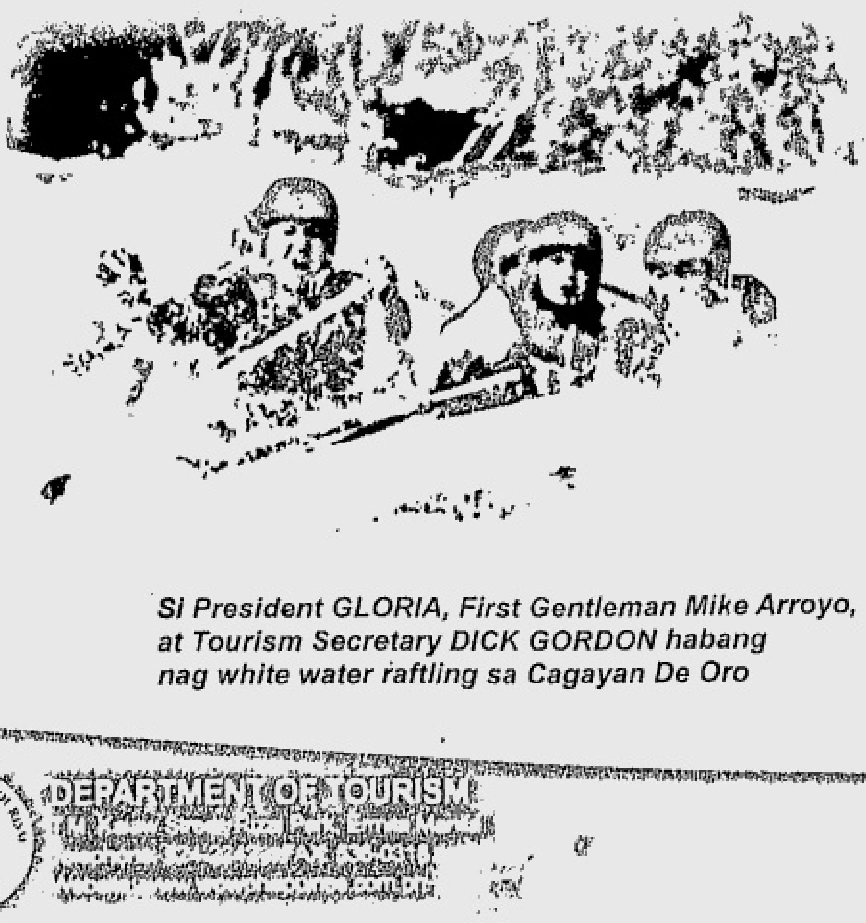
  - WOW NORTHERN PHILIPPINES HILAGA - Ang napabayaang Paskuhan Village sa San Fernando, Pampanga ay ngayon isang showcase ng turismo, agrikultura, kultura at kasaysayan ng mga rehiyong Ilocos, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, at Cordillera Regions.

WOW PHILIPPINES
HILAGA

  - VICTORIES OF THE REVOLUTION LIGHT AND SOUND MUSEUM - Isang Museyo sa Imus, Cavite na ginugunita ang tagumpay ng mga Pilipino sa himagsikan laban sa imperyalismo at kolonyalismo.



- Naglunsad ang DOT ng malawakang kampanya upang mapaganda ang imahe ng Pilipinas. Nagpalabas ng WOW PHILIPPINES at MORE THAN THE USUAL advertisements sa mga international tv stations tulad ng CNN at BBC.
- Noong nagka SARS outbreak, naki-isa ang DOT sa iba't-ibang sangay ng pamahalaan at pribadong sector upang ma-contain ang sakit. Pagkatapos ng masamang epekto ng SARS sa tourism arrivals, naging agresibo ang DOT sa pag-promote ng bayan.
- Pinatakbo ang programang Volunteer-12 o V-12, na naghikayat sa halos 7 Milyong Pilipino sa abroad na dalhin ang kanilang dayuhang kaibigan sa Pilipinas upang magbakasyon.
- Ginawan ng identification at accountability system ang mga taxi at taxi driver upang madali itong MAKITA, MAHANAP, at MAHULI kapag may krimen na naganap laban sa mamamayan at turista.

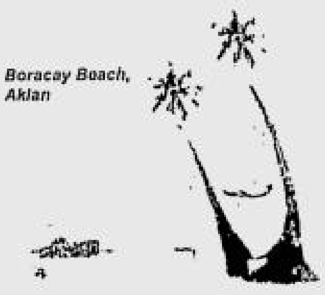

SI President GLORIA, First Gentleman Mike Arroyo, at Tourism Secretary DICK GORDON habang nag white water raftling sa Cagayan De Oro

### ANG RESULTA. TRABAHO, NEGOSYO, POSITIBONG IMAHE - "Tourism Means Jobs"

- Pagkatapos ng ilang taong pagbaba ng tourism arrivals sa Pilipinas, tumaas ito ng 7.6% noong 2002 dahil sa agresibong aksyon ng gobyerno. Kahit pagkatapos ng SARS, kung kailan bumababa ng tourism arrivals sa buong Asia, hindi nagtagal ay bumalik na sa positive growth rates ang arrivals sa Pilipinas.
- Nagkaroon ng LIBO-LIBONG TRABAHO AT NEGOSYO sa industriya ng turismo. Sa Intramuros, 4000 na trabaho ang nalikha, at ang benta ng mga concessionaires ay umabot na ng Php 100 Million.
- Napabilib ang mga international tourism organizations sa bansa at sa liderato ng Pilipinas.
  - Sa International Tourism Bourse (ITB) sa Berlin, Germany, ang pinakamalaking tourism fair sa mundo, NANALO ANG PILIPINAS ng:
    - Best Booth (2001)
    - Best Marketing Effort (2002)
    - Best TV/Video Advertising Campaign (2003).
  - Ang Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) ay nagbigay ng 2001 Gold Award para sa Sustainable Community Based Ecotourism sa Sta. Juliana, Pampanga.
  - Itong 2003, si Secretary DICK GORDON ay binigyan ng award ng TTG Asia, ang nangungunang pahayagan ng turismo sa Asia, para sa Extraordinary Effort, Leadership, at Creativity.
  - Si Secretary DICK GORDON din ay nahalal bilang Chairman ng Pasific Asia Travel Association (PATA) at Chairman ng Commission for East Asia and the Pacific ng World Tourism Organization (WTO).
- Sa loob lamang ng apat na buwan, nakakuha ang DOT ng isang US$5 Million grant mula sa Japan para sa restoration ng Maestranza Wall, ang pinakahuling bahagi ng makasaysayang lumang pader sa Intramuros na nasira noong World War 2.
- Dumalo dito ang liderato ng turismo sa Asia para sa tatlong international conventions: PATA Board of Directors Meeting noong 2002, ang International Convention on Tourism Recovery and Anti-Terrorism noong December 2002, at ang World Tourism Organization Tourism Week noong June 2003. Ito ay nagsabi sa lahat na ang Pilipinas ay isang maganda at mapayapang tourism destination.

Whale Watching
Donsol, Sorsogon

Boracay Beach,
Aklan



> " Pag maraming turista, masusunod ang pakay ng ating gobyerno. May trabaho, may edukasyon, may tahanan, may pagkain sa bawat mesa."
>
> *-President GLORIA*

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PROMO PERIOD: Nov. 14, 2003 - Jan. 4, 2004

Now open Abenson Eastwood Libis Cyber 1 Mall!

Per DTI NCR Permit No.4804 series of 2003

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**BEST 0% DEALS**

Even Santa Claus hollers Ho Ho Ho with Abenson and Equitable Cards' 0% deals on all appliances, all brands in all Abenson stores. Buy now until December 14 to avail of 0% interest installment up to 12 months. As an added bonus, instead of the usual 30-day credit term that most credit cards offer, Equitable cardholders can buy their appliance during the Holidays and pay in January 2004. This is a clear 60-day leeway that allows Equitable credit cardholders to buy to their heart's content!

**BEST ASSORTMENT FOR GIFTS**

Shopping for Holiday gifts? Stop by an Abenson store and choose from a selection of appliances you can give away to friends and family. Our choices of audio video items fit the most tech-savvy dads and sons. The range of home appliances to choose from will make all moms' Wish Lists come true! Plus, all these come in great value deals to suit your budget!

Visit an Abenson store now for these irresistible offers to jumpstart the Holiday gift giving feeling!

**THERE'S AN ABENSON STORE NEARBY!**

**Abenson Eastwood City Libis** located at the heart of Eastwood City, store offers wide selection of AV products.

**Abenson Pacific Mall Lucena City** first store in Quezon province, its a one-stop shop for all appliance needs.

**Abenson Bay City Mall in Batangas City** wide selection of appliances for all your household needs.

**Abenson Plaridel Bulacan** located at WalterMart PLaridel
NOW OPEN!

**ABENSON**
All About Appliances.

# Korean dies, another hurt in sea accident

**By Jhunnex Napallacan**
*PDI Visayas Bureau*

CEBU CITY—A group of seven South Korean tourists spending a holiday here lost one of their female companions while another was in critical condition when the motorboat they hired for a sightseeing trip capsized in waters off Olango Island near Mactan Island at around 11 a.m. yesterday.

The victims, who were staying at the posh Shangri La-Mactan Resort in Lapulapu City, were on an island-hopping trip with five other companions on board motorboat Boyla-6 owned by Simplicio Gelig when it capsized after it was hit by strong waves.

Supt. Louie Oppus, chief of the Lapulapu City police, identified the fatality as Kim Jim Ka, 27, of Seoul.

Oppus said Kim Jim Ka died upon reaching the community hospital in Olango Island, a small islet 6 miles off the east coast of Mactan Island or some 25 minutes by motorboat from Mactan.

Olango Island is a wildlife sanctuary that serves as a safe refuge for more than 10,000 migratory birds from East Asia and Australia.

Another female South Korean, Kim Suk Yung, was also in critical condition.

## SIMULTANEOUS RAIDS

# Anti-'jueteng' drive nets 138

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—A day after Philippine National Police chief Director General Hermogenes Ebdane ordered a stepped up campaign against jueteng operations, the Calabarzon police on Tuesday presented 138 *cobradores* (collectors) and *cabos* (collection supervisors) arrested in a 24-hour drive against the illegal numbers game.

PNP Calabarzon director Chief Supt. Reynaldo Varilla said police units in the region simultaneously launched 45 raids on different areas in the region that started on Monday morning until the following day.

Varilla said all of the arrested suspects were involved in guerrilla-style operations of jueteng.

The Laguna and Rizal police offices arrested 60 suspects; the Batangas police captured 28 collectors; while the Quezon and Cavite police offices arrested 50 suspects, Varilla said.

The Laguna police, led by Senior Supt. Edwin Corvera, initiated 20 raids on gambling dens in the province. Police seized leaflets and other gambling paraphernalia and more than P80,000 in bets.

Corvera said the campaign was not meant to deodorize his name as the newly installed police chief of the Calabarzon area, said to be one of the jueteng hot spots in the country.

Varilla said the arrests came after a surveillance in towns where illegal gambling operations are known to proliferate.

Varilla, who belongs to class 1974 of the Philippine Military Academy, replaced Chief Supt. Jaime Caringal only last Friday.

He said from Jan. 1 until Dec. 15, 2,418 jueteng suspects had been arrested.

Jueteng had caused the downfall of President Joseph Estrada after his former pal, Chavit Singson, testified that proceeds from the illegal numbers game were delivered on a regular basis to Estrada and his son Jinggoy.

The operations of the illegal numbers game are believed to have been financed by Bong Pineda, tagged by authorities as one of the country's biggest gambling lords.

*Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

# 3 fishermen rescued in South Leyte seas

TACLOBAN CITY—Three fishermen were rescued separately in waters off Southern Leyte on Wednesday, two days after their relatives reported them missing.

The Philippine Coast Guard in Eastern Visayas said rescue operations were still ongoing for the five other fishermen, including a 10-year-old boy, who failed to return home after sailing off in separate pump boats also on Monday.

Melchor Rebadulla of the Coast Guard identified the rescued fishermen as Salvador Bacud, 33; Anthony Ortoc and Danilo Plaza, both 28.

Still missing were Romy Maloloyoy, 18; Ramon Estoria, 50; Danilo Prongo, 20; Roy Gadiano, 52 and Marlon Vergara, 10.

The fishermen were from the island-barangay of Manicani off Guiuan town, Eastern Samar.

Rebadulla said Bacud was in his pump boat when he was rescued by the crew members of the fishing vessel Debie Joy-Z, which passed by the area.

Bacud said there was a downpour hours after he left Manicani at about 3 p.m. Water sipped into the engine, causing it to conk out.

He said he tried to revive the engine but it would not start. "It was then that I started to feel hopeless . . . that I could die. I did nothing but pray for my family, and me" he said.

*Joey Gabieta, PDI Visayas Bureau*

ELECTRIC SERVICE IN THESE AREAS WILL BE MOMENTARILY INTERRUPTED
FOR FACILITIES UPGRADING AND OTHER LINE WORK.

MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

POSTED ONLINE AT OUR WEBSITE

100 MERALCO 1903-2003

MONDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2003
LAGUNA (BAY)
BETWEEN 8:30AM AND 2:30PM - PORTION OF CIRCUIT LOS BAÑOS 32WT

Along Barangay Road from near National Road in Bgy. Maitim to Bgy. Sta. Cruz including Bgys. Puypoy, Masaya, Paciano Rizal, Tranca and Sitio Sampalocan.

REASON: Reconstruction work along primary line along Barangay Road in Bgys. Maitim, Sta. Cruz, Puypoy, Masaya, Paciano Rizal and Sitio Sampalocan, Bay, Laguna.

RIZAL (TAYTAY)
BETWEEN 9:00AM AND 1:00PM - PORTION OF CIRCUIT DOLORES 42XM

Portion of Cabrera Road (Kaytikling) from Ortigas Avenue Extension including Blooming Hills Subd., Tower Hills Subd., Maharlika Hills Subd. and portion of Manila East Road in Bgy. Dolores.

REASON: Relocation of facilities along Cabrera Road affected by DPWH road widening project.

MERALCO exerts all efforts to restore electric service as scheduled. However, there are instances when due to unavoidable circumstances, restoration may extend beyond the published schedule.

For more information, please contact our CALL CENTER at telephone number 16211, fax nos. 1622-8554, or e-mail address call-center.tech.assist@meralco.com.ph. For faster resolution of inquiries, please use the *Bill ID Number or Service Identification Number (SIN)* indicated in your electric bills.

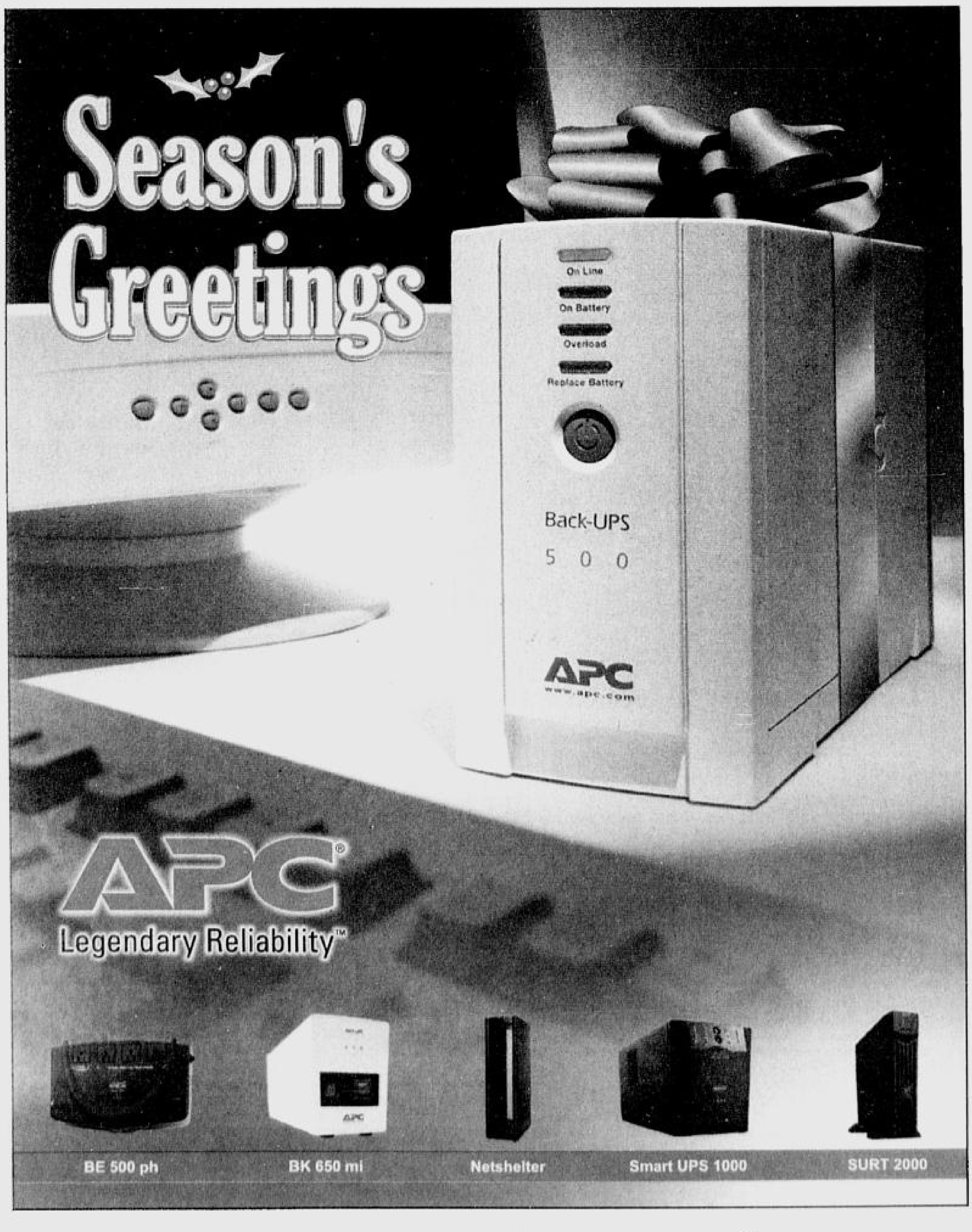
For those who prefer to receive this schedule via e-mail, please write us at call-center.tech.assist@meralco.com.ph and type in the phrase "Request for weekly schedule".

HAVE A SAFE and MERRY CHRISTMAS!!!

Some safety reminders from Meralco:
- Keep combustible materials away from Christmas bulbs or heating sources
- Don't use lighting sets with cracked or exposed wiring to avoid electrical shock
- Make sure you use outdoor-designed lights for garden and other outdoor uses.

**SUPREME CAROLING** Chief Justice Hilario Davide takes time out Dec. 10 to meet with a group of children of farm workers in Negros Occidental who sang Christmas carols to the chief justice hoping to win the court's heart for the agrarian reform cases their parents are involved in. The children sought Davide's help for their parents who have been charged with various cases by landlords seeking to evade agrarian reform.

PHOTO FROM TASK FORCE MAPALAD



# Mayor's bodyguards held for gun ban violation

**By Jhunnex Napallacan**
*PDI Visayas Bureau*

CEBU CITY—Two police bodyguards of a municipal mayor in Bohol were arrested on Wednesday for violating the election gun ban.

PO3 Zenon Anora and PO2 Roseller Bañez, bodyguards of Mayor Leandro Tirol of Buenavista town, were detained at the Lapulapu police station pending the filing of criminal charges against them.

The two policemen were caught carrying their firearms inside the Lapulapu City Hall of Justice while attending a hearing of the bigamy case filed by Tirol against Bohol Rep. Roberto Cajes and his wife Judith.

Tirol claimed that Judith was still married to Alexis Lao of Danao City, Cebu when she and Cajes were wed in Lapulapu City in the early 1990s.

Supt. Louie Oppus, chief of the Lapulapu City police station, said Anora and Bañez had mission orders for their .45 cal. pistols issued by Supt. Sancho Bernales, Bohol provincial police chief.

He, however, said the policemen did not secure an exemption from the Commission on Elections (Comelec) on the gun ban, which started Dec. 15.

He said the policemen are not allowed to bring their firearms unless they secured an exemption from the Comelec.

Oppus ordered Insp. Nestor Magno, head of the Lapulapu police intelligence and investigation section, to go to the Hall of Justice after Reynaldo Esmeralda, National Bureau of Investigation regional director, informed him of the presence of the two armed men.

These armed men turned out to be Anora and Bañez who were immediately invited for questioning at the Lapulapu police station.

Oppus said Tirol's lawyer Salvador Solima lambasted him over the phone and demanded the release of the policemen.

But Oppus said he told Solima to direct his request to the NBI because he just acted on an inter-department order from NBI, which would file the charges against the policemen.

Solima criticized the police for arresting Anora and Bañez even if they had presented their mission orders.

The two policemen, he added, were there to secure Tirol due to threats on the mayor's life.

# Former Rangers chief-of-staff receives award from President

A FORMER chief of staff of the Scout Rangers became one of the Army unit's awardees in rites recently attended by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Retired Col. Romeo Lim, former chief-of-staff of the Rangers, received a plaque of appreciation from Ms Macapagal for helping speed up the release of medical supplies for the regiment's medical missions.

Lim received the award for facilitating the delivery of medicines and other medical supplies to areas where the Scout Rangers were helping poor patients get medical treatment.

Lim was one of the Scout Ranger awardees presented with plaques and medals by the President in her visit to the Scout Rangers' base at Camp Tecson in Barangay Tartaro in San Miguel, Bulacan.

Lim had been a recipient of other awards from the Army for bravery and gallantry in battle during the Moro secessionist war in Mindanao.

Aside from Lim, the President also gave awards to Capt. Montano Almodovar for acts of courage and gallantry during an encounter with 187 Abu Sayyaf members in Isabela, Basilan on Oct. 7, 2001.

MALAMIG (AT MASARAP) ANG SIMOY NG HANGIN ..

# In Marikina, lawmen now smell the Christmas air

A POLICE officer took a deep breath and smiled. "Now, it really smells like Christmas," he then sighed.

Earlier, lawmen at police headquarters contemplated asking Santa Claus for gas masks to help them survive the stench of a leaking septic tank just outside their offices.

They got a better gift instead.

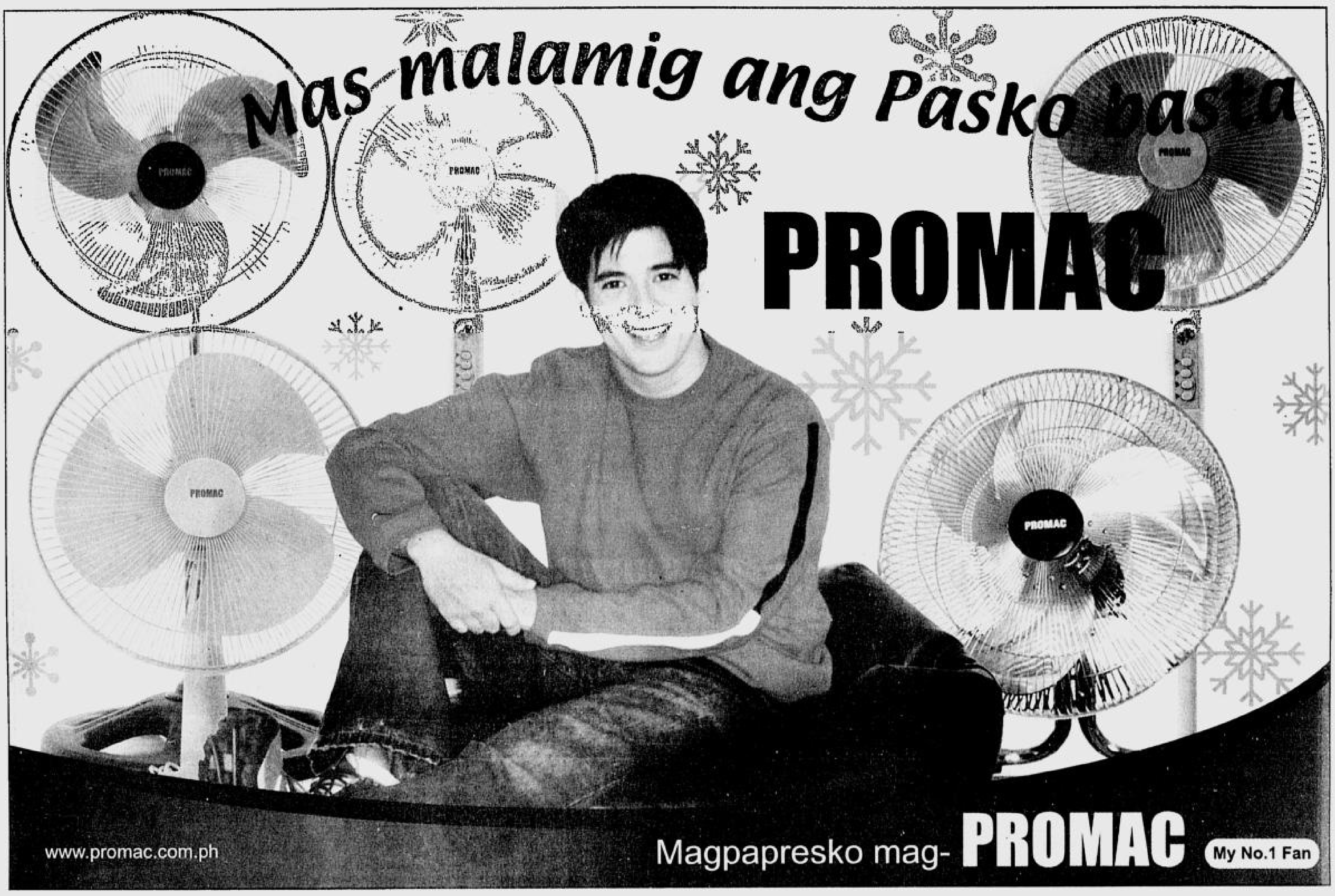
The city sent a septic tank excavator, which pumped out the foul smelling goo.

Later, they took some cement and sealed the septic tank cover to prevent future leaks.

For weeks, the policemen and the inmates at the city police headquarters complained of the bad smell that emanated from the tank.

Yesterday, the cops were singing Christmas carols to City Hall and saying, "Thank you... Thank you... *Ang babait ninyo.* (You're so kind) Thank you!"

*Luige del Puerto*



# Sa araw ng eleksyon — Ito'y magagamit sa pandaraya... papayag ka ba?

## THE LIES AND TRUTHS ABOUT COMELEC'S AWARD TO MEGA PACIFIC eSOLUTIONS, INC.

**1. LIE:** The P1.3 Billion Contract to supply the Automated Counting Machines valued at P1.3 Billion was awarded to the winning bidder Mega Pacific Consortium, consisting of Mega Pacific eSolutions,Inc. SK C&C Co. Ltd., ePLDT, Inc., WeSolve Open Computing, Inc. and Election.Com Ltd.

**TRUTH:** The P1.3 Billion Contract was NOT Awarded to Mega Pacific Consortium, but solely to Mega Pacific eSolutions, Inc., as per documents submitted to the Supreme Court.*

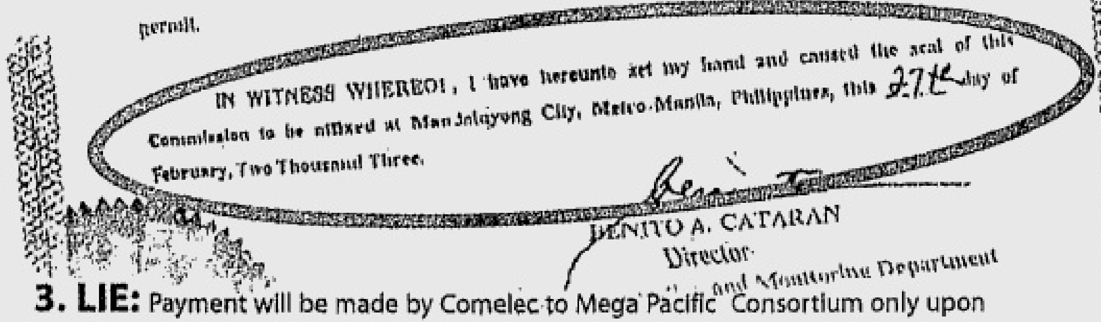
**TRUTH:** SK C&C. Ltd, ePLDT, Inc., WeSolv Open Pacific Computing, Inc. and Election.Com Ltd. are not consortium members, but merely suppliers of either software services and products or hardware requirements of Mega Pacific eSolutions, Inc.*

**TRUTH:** Election.Com Ltd. and ePLDT Inc. are mere "subcontractors" of Mega Pacific eSolutions based on the records submitted by Mega Pacific eSolutions itself to the Supreme Court.*

**2. LIE:** Mega Pacific eSolutions is qualified to bid and be awarded the P1.3 Billion Contract by the Comelec.

**TRUTH:** Comelec's Bidding rules required that corporate bidders should have been in existence for at least THREE (3) YEARS, and if not the manufacturer, should have dealt in said goods for at least FIVE (5) YEARS.

Mega Pacific eSolutions, Inc. was incorporated only on February 27, 2003 as per records of the Securities and Exchange Commission, eleven (11) days before the bidding on March 10, 2003.*



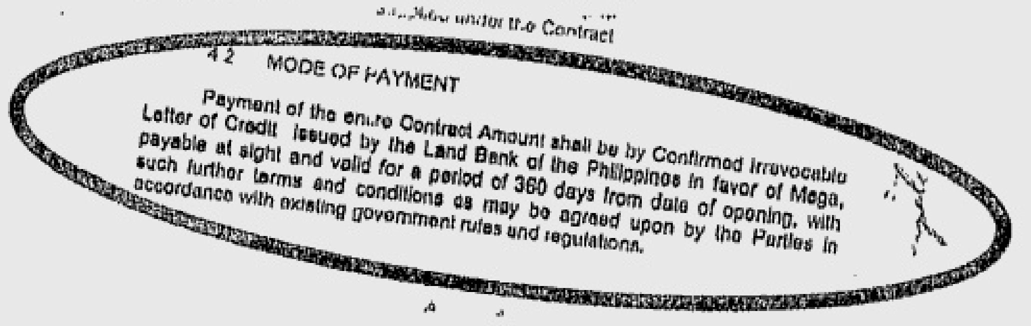
permit.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of this Commission to be affixed at Mandaluyong City, Metro-Manila, Philippines, this 27th day of February, Two Thousand Three.

BENITO A. CATARAN
Director
and Monitoring Department

**3. LIE:** Payment will be made by Comelec to Mega Pacific Consortium only upon acceptance of the counting machines.

**TRUTH:** Paragraph 4.2 of the Contract provides "Payment of the entire Contract Amount shall be by Confirmed Irrevocable Letter of Credit issued by the Land Bank of the Philippines in favor of Mega "(Mega Pacific eSolutions), "payable at sight..."*



under the Contract

4.2 MODE OF PAYMENT

Payment of the entire Contract Amount shall be by Confirmed Irrevocable Letter of Credit issued by the Land Bank of the Philippines in favor of Mega, payable at sight and valid for a period of 360 days from date of opening, with such further terms and conditions as may be agreed upon by the Parties in accordance with existing government rules and regulations.

**4. LIE:** Complainants represent the company that lost the bid and have vested interests.

**TRUTH:** Not one of the signatories in the petition for a TRO now pending at the Supreme Court represents the company that lost the bid. There were only two bidders—Mega Pacific eSolutions, Inc. and Total Information System, Inc. (TIM). (While there were 57 international and local election system providers who bought copies of the bid specs, the arbitrary Comelec bid specifications could have driven away better and less expensive election system vendors.)

**In addition, they claimed:** "...the Mega Pacific stand alone automatic counting machines (ACM) have a 100% accuracy rating under all environmental conditions provided that the ballots are shaded correctly.

**Our Reaction:** If the counting machine is connected to a network, then it is NOT stand-alone

100% accuracy rating? Based on how many samples?

"...provided that the ballots are shaded correctly" – who shaded the ballots that were tested? The supplier? The DOST? What if the shading is less than perfect, as is most likely going to be the situation? The bid specs state that the supplier must show the accuracy rating when the ballot is marked in different ways – full dark shade, light shade, a marking area that has the top half-shaded, shaded bottom-half, a shaded left-half, a shaded right half, an "X" mark, a check mark, a dot covering 20% of the marking area, a dot covering 50% of the marking area, and, a dot covering 75% of the marking area. Did they do all these?

**If they cannot conduct an HONEST bidding process, can we trust them to conduct an HONEST election process?**

***"He who casts the vote decides nothing. But he who counts the votes decides everything." (Josef Stalin)***

This is a Paid Advertisement

* Copies of the documents may also be secured from the Pastelero Law Office, 1503 B, Phil. Stock Exchange Center, Exchange Road, Pasig City. Tel. No. 6346486 to 89

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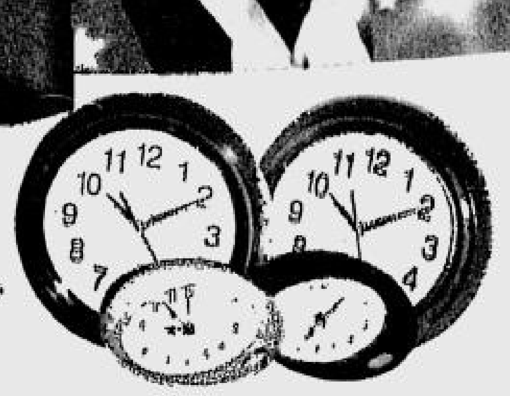
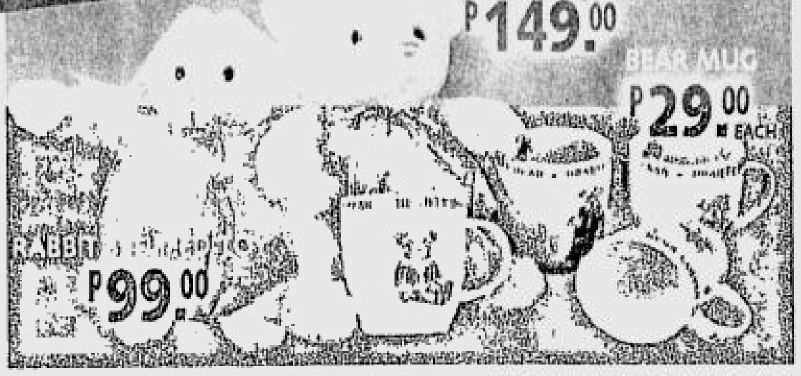
A Magical Christmas



WALL CLOCK
20 CM (8")
P99.00 EACH

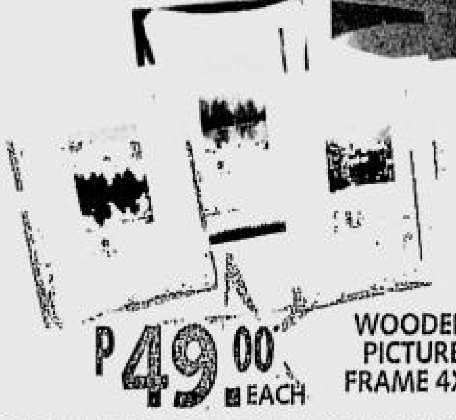
ALARM CLOCK
P99.00 EACH



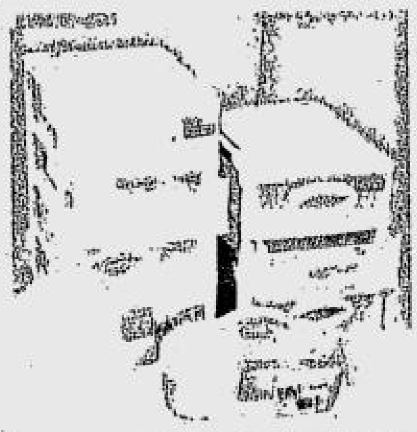
TEDDY BEAR
P149.00

BEAR MUG
P29.00 EACH

RABBIT
P99.00



P49.00 EACH
WOODEN PICTURE FRAME 4X6



MINI DRAWER
3 LAYERS
P99.00
4 LAYERS
P129.00

STORE BOX
SMALL P59.00
LARGE P79.00

HAIR KIT

P149.00

INCENSE
P69.00 EACH

MONOCHROMATIC SCENTED CANDLES
P69.00 – P129.00 EACH

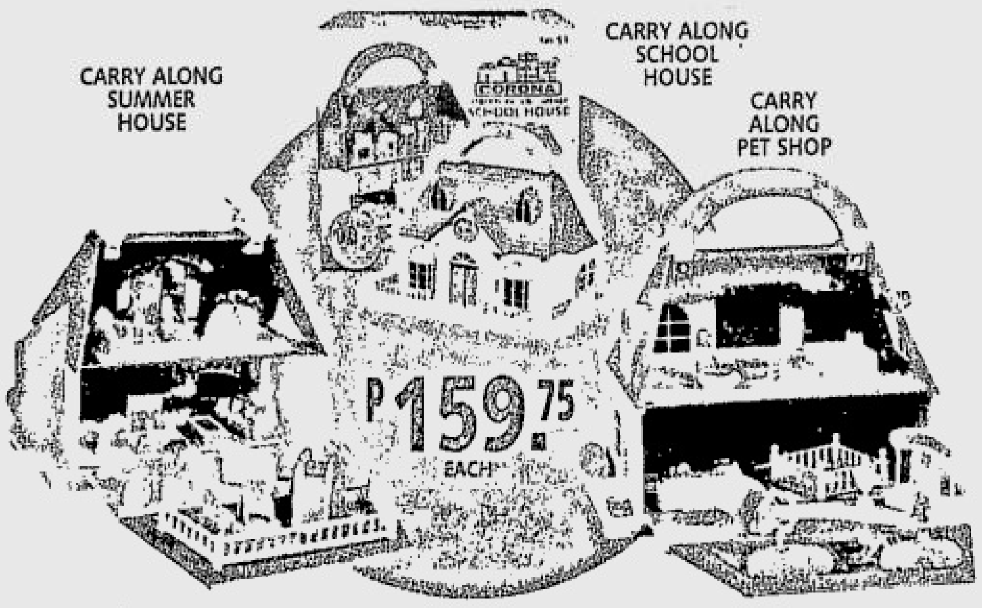
## Gift Suggestions

TOP-
PROWL CAR
POLICE
POLICE CAR
TORNADO FORCE

P139.75 EACH
SUPER OVERLORD
CROSS-COUNTRY

P239.50
PROWL CAR POLICE

CARRY ALONG SUMMER HOUSE
CARRY ALONG SCHOOL HOUSE
CARRY ALONG PET SHOP



P159.75 EACH

FORMAL AFFAIR

P139.00
BECKI DOLL

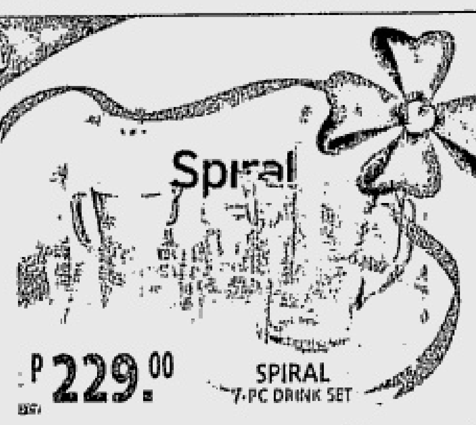
ATM
THANK YOU
ERROR

P599.50
ATM AT HOME
LIGHT & SAVINGS BANK

RC BATTLE TANK

P289.50
RC BATTLE TANK

## Pre Wrapped gift Items



P229.00
SPIRAL
7-PC DRINK SET

[illegible]
6-PC BOWL SET
P109.00

CASSANDRA
6-PC BOWL SET
P109.00

VIOLA
6-PC ICE CREAM CUP
P249.00

Donnatello

DONNATELLO
2-PC BOWL SET
P69.00

BLUESTAR
2-PC BOWL SET
P39.00

SWEET PACIFIC
2-PC BOWL SET
P59.00

16-PC DINNER SET
P699.00

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**STORE HOURS**
**7 AM - 10 PM**

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BIG R SUPERCENTER METRO EAST : ROBINSONS METRO EAST, MARCOS HIGHWAY, COR. IMELDA AVENUE, PASIG CITY TEL# 6822230-37
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**SUERTRES** 0 2 2

**SIX DIGIT** (In exact order)
0 7 8 4 3 6

**SUPERLOTTO 6/49**
14 20 21 22 29 41

METRO
E-mail: pr_metro@inquirer.com.ph
*Editor* Abelardo S. Ulanday

**TO THE RESCUE**
**A traffic enforcer from the Land Transportation Office pushes a car that got stalled along the President Diosdado Macapagal Boulevard to get it out of the way of other vehicles.**
JOE ARAZAS

### MIDNIGHT MASS VIOLENCE

# Man stabbed to death; 7 hurt in pillbox blast

**By Edson Tandoc Jr.**

WHAT was supposed to be a solemn Simbang Gabi mass yesterday morning turned into chaos when a pillbox exploded just a few meters away from the San Roque Cathedral in Caloocan City.

The explosion, which happened in the middle of the priest's homily, wounded seven people.

In Valenzuela City, policemen were nowhere in sight when a 17-year-old man was stabbed to death shortly after the victim attended mass.

Police officials had earlier announced that lawmen would be deployed to secure the churches.

But a church volunteer at the San Roque Cathedral said that the 2 or 3 policemen assigned to their church could not possibly watch over the thousands of people that attend mass every morning.

The volunteer also told the INQUIRER that most of the early morning church-goers are "thrill-seeking" teenagers.

At 4:50 a.m. yesterday, the San Roque Cathedral at the corner of A. Mabini Street and 10th Avenue was rocked by an explosion.

Investigators said Eleozer Manansala, 17, tossed a pillbox at a group of teenagers at the cathedral's patio. Elix Orone, Janno Obrero, Raymond Manansala, Christian Arroyo, Allan Paule, Zaldy Enriquez and Edwin Bacani were wounded in the blast and were taken to the Ospital ng Caloocan.

Barangay security men and angry church-goers ran after the suspect and caught him.

At about the same time, Ericson Florentino, 17, had just gone out of the Our Lady of Fatima Church in Valenzuela and was was walking home with his friends when about seven teenagers appeared and began hurling stones.

The attackers chased and cornered Florentino when he tried to run away, said PO2 Richard Bautista.

One man, identified only as Andong, pulled out a knife and stabbed Florentino five times.

# Employees picket Ever supermarket

**By Edson Tandoc Jr.**

EMPLOYEES of Ever Emporium Supermarket in Caloocan City yesterday refused to report for work and instead formed a picket outside the store yesterday.

Kilusan ng Manggagawa sa Ever vice president Paul Torio told the INQUIRER yesterday that they were protesting the lay off of 43 fellow employees.

The employees, most of whom had been with the company for more than 20 years, were laid off after the Ever Department Store in Recto closed down, Torio added.

Torio said the lay off violated the Collective Bargaining Agreement, which stated that the employees should have been absorbed by the other branches of the department store chain.

But the company chose to lay the workers off.

The 37 employees at the Caloocan City branch started their picket on Wednesday noon.

They brought mats which indicated that they intend to stay outside the building until the issue is resolved.

The INQUIRER called the company thrice yesterday to get their comment, but was told the official authorized to grant an interview was in a closed door meeting.

# QC roads closed as giant networks hold parties

ALL ROADS leading to the offices of ABS-CBN and GMA 7 are expected to experience heavy traffic today, as the two giant television networks hold their annual Christmas party from noon to 1 a.m. the next day.

Lopez Street (from Tomas Morato Extension to Mother Ignacia St.) and 11th Jamboree Extension (from Timog Ave. to Edsa) will be closed, according to Assistant City Administrator for External Affairs and Department of Public Order and Safety chief Manuel Sabalza.

Also, a portion of Banaue St. (from N. Roxas to Maria Clara Sts.) will be closed today at noon to 1 a.m. the following day to give way for the "Paskuhan sa Banaue."

Motorists are advised to avoid these areas.

Sabalza has also ordered the deployment of DPOS personnel to handle traffic in the affected areas.

## METROBRIEFS

### No turnover

THE TWO Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency agents accused of shooting an agent of the National Bureau of Investigation have not been placed in the custody of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, contrary to claims of PDEA officials. In a statement, an NBI official said that they had learned from the CIDG that the two PDEA agents charged with the shooting of NBI Agent Marvin Matamis were never turned over to the police group. The PDEA men are P03 Norman Jesus Platon and P03 Sherwin Bulan. A third man, Senior Supt. Orlando Mabutas, regional director of the PDEA's Metro Manila Regional Office, was also charged with frustrated murder and theft before the justice department. *Leila Salaverria*

### Raped in QC

PETER Interna, a security guard and resident of Regalado Avenue, Fairview, Quezon City, yesterday was arrested for allegedly raping his sister-in-law in their house. The 36-year-old victim, who filed a complaint with the police, claimed that Interna had even threatened to kill her if she reported the incident to the authorities.

*Tina Santos*

### Lamp posts anyone?

NELSON Abalos and another man on Wednesday night were caught loading onto a pedicab a lamp post which they had just taken apart at the corner of Rizal Ave. and Doroteo Jose St. in Sta. Cruz, Manila. Barangay security men chased the two men and caught Abalos, 26, alleged member of the Sigue-Sigue Sputnik gang, on Claro M. Recto Avenue. The other man managed to elude arrest. The barangay men recovered the aluminum and fiberglass lamppost, a city government property. They also seized the tools which the suspects used in dismantling the street lamp. *Tarra Quismundo*

### Boy dies in fire

DARREL James Puza, 2, died in a fire in Antipolo City yesterday morning. Firefighters pulled out the body of Puza from the ruins of his family residence in Sitio Sucaben, Barangay Mambugan. F03 Armando Diaz said the mother, Diane, 21, left the boy sleeping on the second floor of their home at around 9 a.m. to buy food. Diaz said witnesses had seen the victim's 6-year-old cousin playing with a candle inside the house. The candle could have sparked the fire, Diaz said.

*Luige del Puerto*

### Man stabs stepdad

ROMEO M. Emberso, 46, yesterday was said to be drunk when he tried to hurt his wife inside their house in Manila. His stepson, Carlo Nuvio, 22, stopped Emberso by planting a knife in his chest, police said. When Emberso, a resident of Parola Compound, Tondo, Manila, arrived home at around 5:30 a.m., he was drunk and tried to pick a fight with members of his household, SP01 Raul Olavario said. Emberso's wife, Rowena, tried to pacify her husband. but the man went on and even allegedly tried to to attack her. When Nuvio saw that his mother was about to get beaten up, he grabbed a knife and stabbed Emberso several times. *Leila Salaverria*

# 2 die, cop hurt as rash of crime hits Metro streets

**By Leila Salaverria**

A TAIWANESE tourist and a security guard were shot dead while an off-duty policeman was seriously wounded in three robbery incidents that hit the metropolis.

In Manila, Taiwanese Wen Hua Yang, 33, was shot dead when three men announced a holdup inside a jeepney along M.H. del Pilar Street at 4:45 a.m. yesterday.

The killing of Wen happened as Western Police District chief Pedro Bulaong boasted of the effectivity of his deployment of "sekretas" or secret agents to fight crime.

Hours earlier, at 9:15 p.m. Wednesday, a lone gunman shot security guard Eraño Bringas in the head during a heist at the Sta. Teresita Drug Store on North Bay Boulevard South in Navotas.

At about the same time inside a bus along Edsa in Makati City, a knife-wielding man stabbed SPO3 Hyacinth Ocfemia, 44, detailed in Parañaque City.

The suspect even shot the lawmen with the victim's own gun when the latter resisted.

Ocfemia, who was stabbed eight times, was rushed to a nearby hospital.

Meanwhile, police investigators are looking at a possible inside job after P250,000 was stolen from Miguel Isleta, a shoe design artist, of the Corona Sports Co. in Barangay Parang.

*With Edson Tandoc Jr., Marguax Ortiz and Luige del Puerto*

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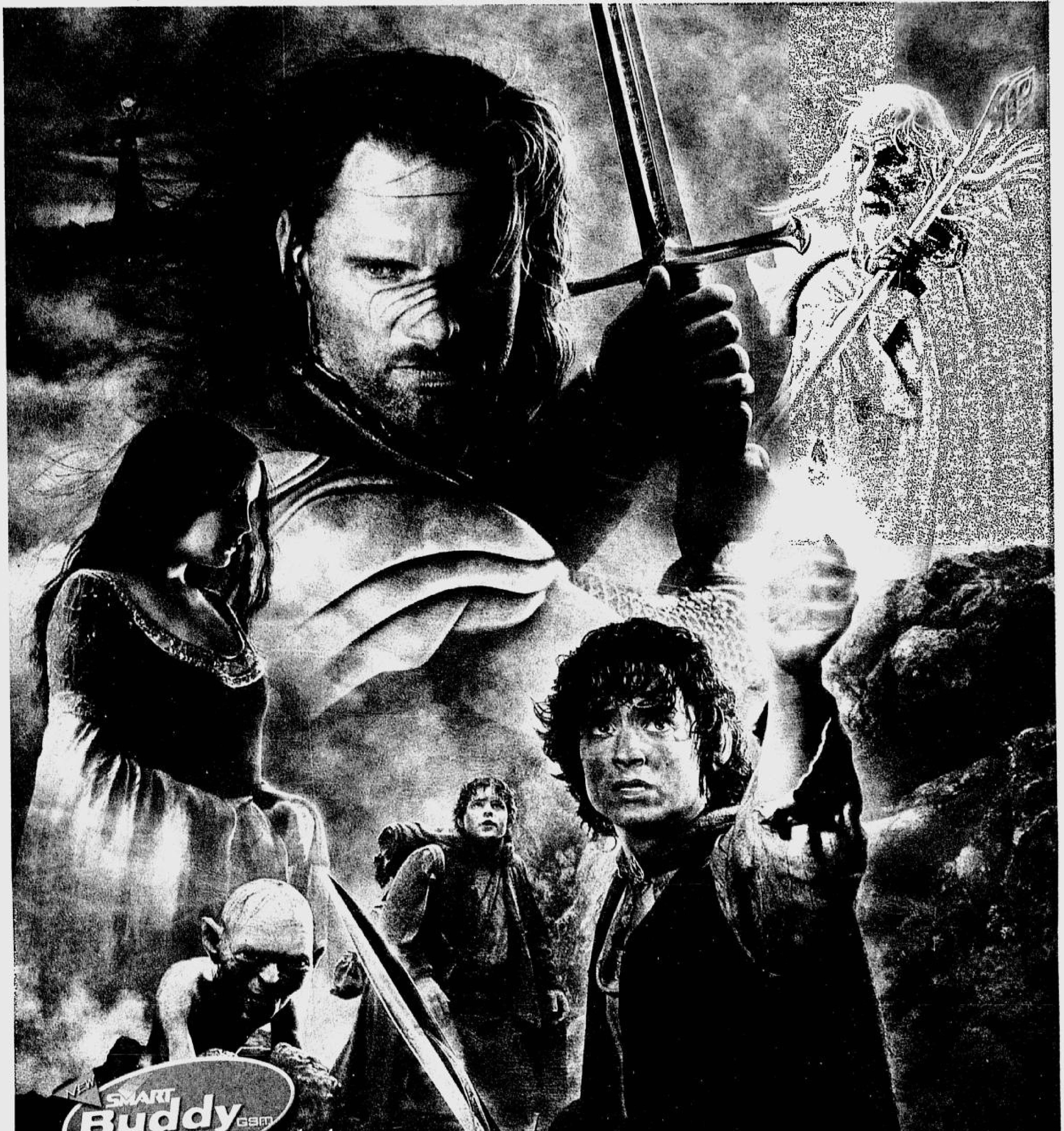

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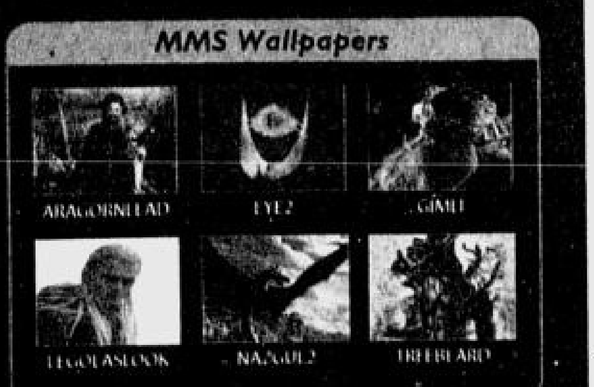

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## Top SEAG athletes to call on GMA /A27

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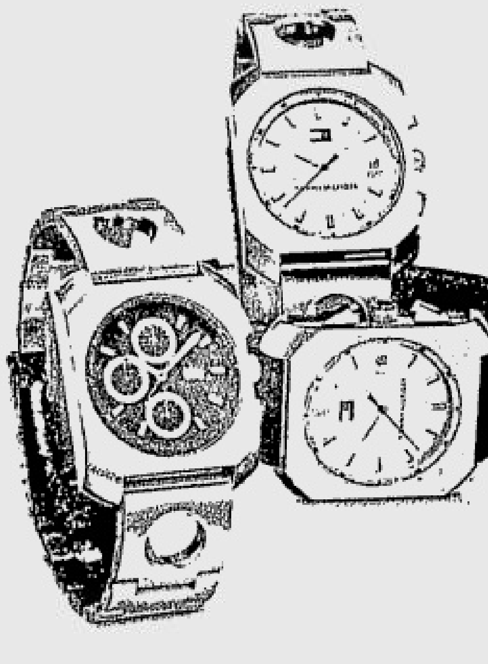
# Big gathering of stars at PSA annual awards

THE PHILIPPINE Sportswriters Association will stage what is expected to be the biggest gathering of sports stars in recent years when it holds the 2003 PSA Annual Awards Night on Jan. 9 at the Manila Pavilion.

Malacañang has already acknowledged receipt of the copy of invitation sent by PSA president Robert D. Cuevas subject to confirmation of President Macapagal-Arroyo, who is expected to grace the occasion this year to personally present the awards and cash incentives to the athletes.

Two years ago, the Chief Executive graced

BIG/ A27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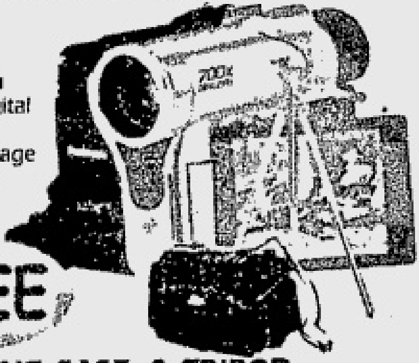

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# Tams take Champs' League title

**FOR the second straight year the UAAP lived up to its billing.**

**Far Eastern romped off with a masterful 89-81 win over San Sebastian College to bag the 2003 Champions' League crown yesterday at the Rizal Memorial Coliseum.**

The Tamaraws thus kept the national championship in the UAAP fold following University of the East's triumph in the tournament inaugural last year.

"This is the product of our hard work. I give my boys all the credit," said winning coach Koy Banal, who had earlier given FEU the UAAP championship by dethroning Ateneo.

The Tamaraws posted a 27-20 lead in the first quarter but found difficulty putting away the Stags.

Pep Moore held his own against the tall FEU frontline in the first half, hitting 10 as the Stags took a 35-33 lead midway in the second.

But Arwind Santos buried three consecutive three-pointers to spark another Tamaraw stampede for a 47-40 lead going to the locker room.

"It has been a great season for us, and we thank God for that," added Banal, who also guided FEU to the Bantay Bata 163 title this year.

The Stags, runner-up in the NCAA, rallied at the start of the fourth period behind Leo Najorda.

**Scores:**

**FEU 89**—Sinco 16, Santos 15, Isip 14, Rizada 14, Miranda 13, Jones 10, Chan 3, Razon 2, Sierra 2, Yabut 0.

**SSC-R 81**—Najorda 20, Moore 18, Vicente 12, Gonzales 11, Maneclang 7, Baluyot 6, Rebuya 5, Aguilar 2, Uy 0.

**Quarters:** 27-20, 48-41, 69-61, 89-81

**ARWIND Santos of FEU soars for a layup in a starring role for the Tamaraws, who captured the Champions' League title over San Sebastian yesterday.** ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

# Top SEAG athletes pay courtesy call on GMA

THE 48 gold medalists who secured for Team Philippines fourth place overall in the recent 22nd Southeast Asian Games will pay a courtesy call on President Macapagal-Arroyo this morning.

The President and First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo are expected to greet the athletes over lunch at the Heroes Hall.

Both the President and the First Gentleman threw their support behind Team Philippines, which also took 54 silver and 75 bronze medals, all the way, with Mr. Arroyo even flying to Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh to cheer for the athletes.

The athletes will be presented to the First Couple by Philippine Sports Commission chair Eric Buhain.

Buhain said the PSC had focused its attention on the SEAG since November last year. But he gave all credit to the athletes, who conquered the odds and showed they were not distracted by what others said were the demoralizing effect of the delay in their allowances.

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# Big gathering of stars in PSA annual awards

From page A25

the PSA rites, presenting the top award shared by Fil-American golfer Dorothy Delasin and billiards king Efren "Bata" Reyes.

Manny Pacquiao, the "people's consensus" world featherweight champ and reigning International Boxing Federation superbantam titlist, and CJ Suarez, the fourth Filipino to win the Bowling World Cup, head the awardees as co-winners of the Athlete of the Year plum.

Also high on the list of awardees are the women's trios of Liza del Rosario, Liza Clutario and Cecilia Yap, who made history by becoming the first Asians to win a gold in the World Tenpin bowling championship, and the Bacolod girls' softball squad which topped the Junior League World Series 13-14 division.

Sports officials said the President, who failed to grace last year's edition, is very likely to accept the invitation considering her support to the campaign of Pacquiao and the other athletes and the backing of First Gentleman Mike Arroyo to sports through the First Gentleman Foundation.

Other achievers, including the gold medalists in the last Southeast Asian Games in Vietnam, will be feted during the Awards Night sponsored by Red Bull and Agfa Color and supported by San Miguel Corp., Philippine Olympic Committee, Philippine Sports Commission, Samsung, Philippine Basketball Association and Manila Mayor Lito Atienza.

**The awardees:**

**Athletes of the Year**—Manny Pacquiao and CJ Suarez

**PSA President's Award**—Liza del Rosario, Liza Clutario and Cecilia Yap

**Antonio M. Siddayao Award**—Bacolod girls' softball team

**Hall of Fame**—Ben Arda and Celestino Tugot

**Major awardees**—Dorothy Delasin, women's golf; Wind Blown, horse of the year; Mark Paragua, chess; Arnel Quirimit, pro cycling; Patty Dilema, horse racing; Harry Tañamor, amateur boxing; James Yap, amateur basketball; Asi Taulava, pro basketball. Citations—Steve Hontiveros, FedEx, First Gentleman Foundation, Jojo Cañare, Ronald Dableo, Philippine Track and Field Association, Philippine Bowling Congress, Jayvee Agojo, Philippine Racing Commission, Samsung, Glenn Aguilar.

**Special citations**—Far Eastern University basketball team (SEA Games gold medalists)—Eduardo Buenavista, Ernie Candelario, John Lozada, Lerma Bulauitan-Gabito, Rene Herrera, Arniel Ferrera, Allan Ballester, Danilo Fresnido, Arvin Ting, Willy Wang, Eduard Folayang, Dolly Andres, Donald David Geisler III, Veronica Domingo, Dax Morfe, Mary Antoinnete Rivero, Margarita Bonifacio, Walbert Mendoza, Lenita Reyes, Epee team (Richard Gomez, Avelino Victorino Jr., Wilfredo Vizcayno and Almario Vizcayno), fencing foil team (Rolando Canlas Jr., Ruperto Endriano Jr., Ramil Endriano and Emerson Segui), Marcus Valda, Cris Villanueva, Melchor Tumasis, John Baylon, Gilbert Ramirez, Helen Dawa, Rapid chess team (Mark Paragua, Eugene Torre, Joey Antonio and Bong Villamayor), Standard chess team (Mark Paragua, Eugene Torre, Bong Villamayor, Roger Antonio, Ronald Dableo), Miguel Molina, Miguel Mendoza, Lee Van Corteza, 9-ball doubles team (Lee Van Corteza and Warren Kiamco), Neil Faustino, Roel Ramirez, Ryan Rexel Fabriga, Jaime Asok, Gretchen Malalad, women's archery team (Jasmin Figueroa, Jennifer Chan, Rachel Cabral, Jaoann Tabanag), Men's trap team (Eric Ang, Jaime Recio, Jethro Dionisio), Eusebio Quinones and men's 500-m team in traditional boat race.

**Posthumous awards**—Peter Alegre, Percela Molina, Robert Cheng, Rene Fortaleza, Manolet Araneta, Edilberto Gamilla, Pedro Adigue.

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## SPORTS TV

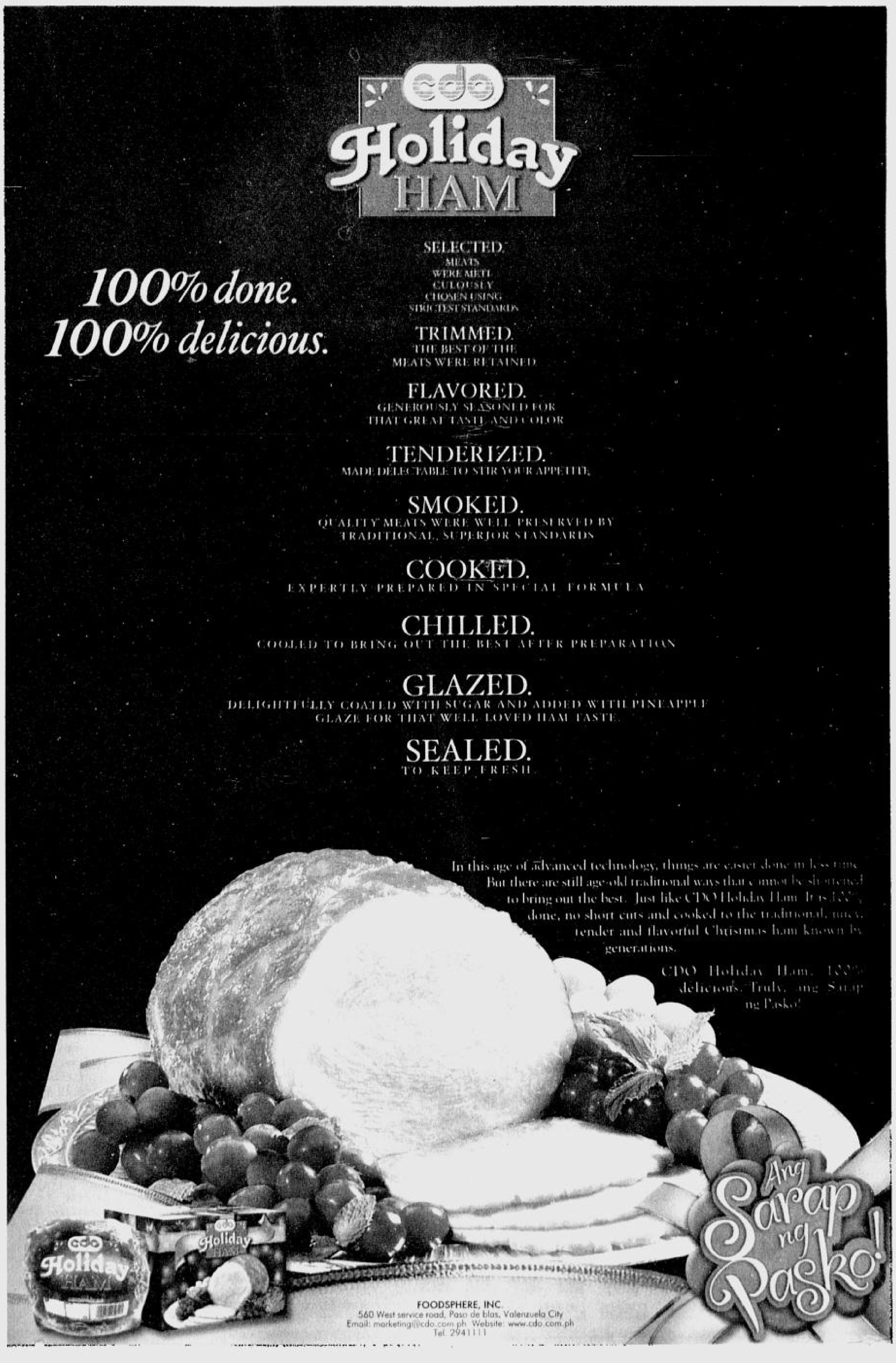
Compiled by L. Manguiat

**BASKETBALL:** NBA-Kings vs Hornets; 9 a.m. (r-8 p.m.); Solar Sports; Suns vs Blazers; 11 a.m. (r - 9 p.m.); Star Sports—Sacramento won't take it easy as it visits New Orleans while Phoenix doesn't expect a bed of roses in Portland.

NBA Greatest Games-Bucks vs Sonics, Game 7, 1980 Western Semifinals; 12 noon. Solar Sports—See Milwaukee compete out in the west when it took on Seattle.

FIBA Euro 2003; 4 p.m. (r); Solar Sports—Take another look at the encounter between Spain and eventual champion Lithuania.

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.



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# Sunkist spills Montaña

## *Yap shines as Welcoat barges into semifinals*

By Marc Anthony Reyes

**ALEX Compton fired 31 points and Jemal Vizcarra added 28 yesterday as Sunkist-UST rolled back Montaña in overtime, 101-94, for its fourth straight victory in the PBL Platinum Cup at the Pasig Sports Center.**

Compton hit eight of 14 triples, including the trey that forced the extension at 82-all with 10 seconds left after the Tigers blew a 51-27 lead in the second quarter.

The victory moved Sunkist closer to a semifinal berth with a 6-4, win-loss card even as Montaña fell to 4-4.

Meanwhile, James Yap hardly showed the rigors of the successful SEAG campaign by the national team recently as he led Welcoat over Blu Star, 71-62, in the second game.

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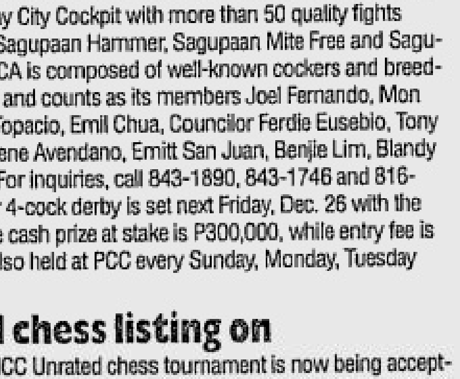

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Insider

# Sunkist spills Montaña

## *Yap shines as Welcoat barges into semifinals*

By Marc Anthony Reyes

ALEX Compton fired 31 points and Jemal Vizcarra added 28 yesterday as Sunkist-UST rolled back Montaña in overtime, 101-94, for its fourth straight victory in the PBL Platinum Cup at the Pasig Sports Center.

Compton hit eight of 14 triples, including the trey that forced the extension at 82-all with 10 seconds left after the Tigers blew a 51-27 lead in the second quarter.

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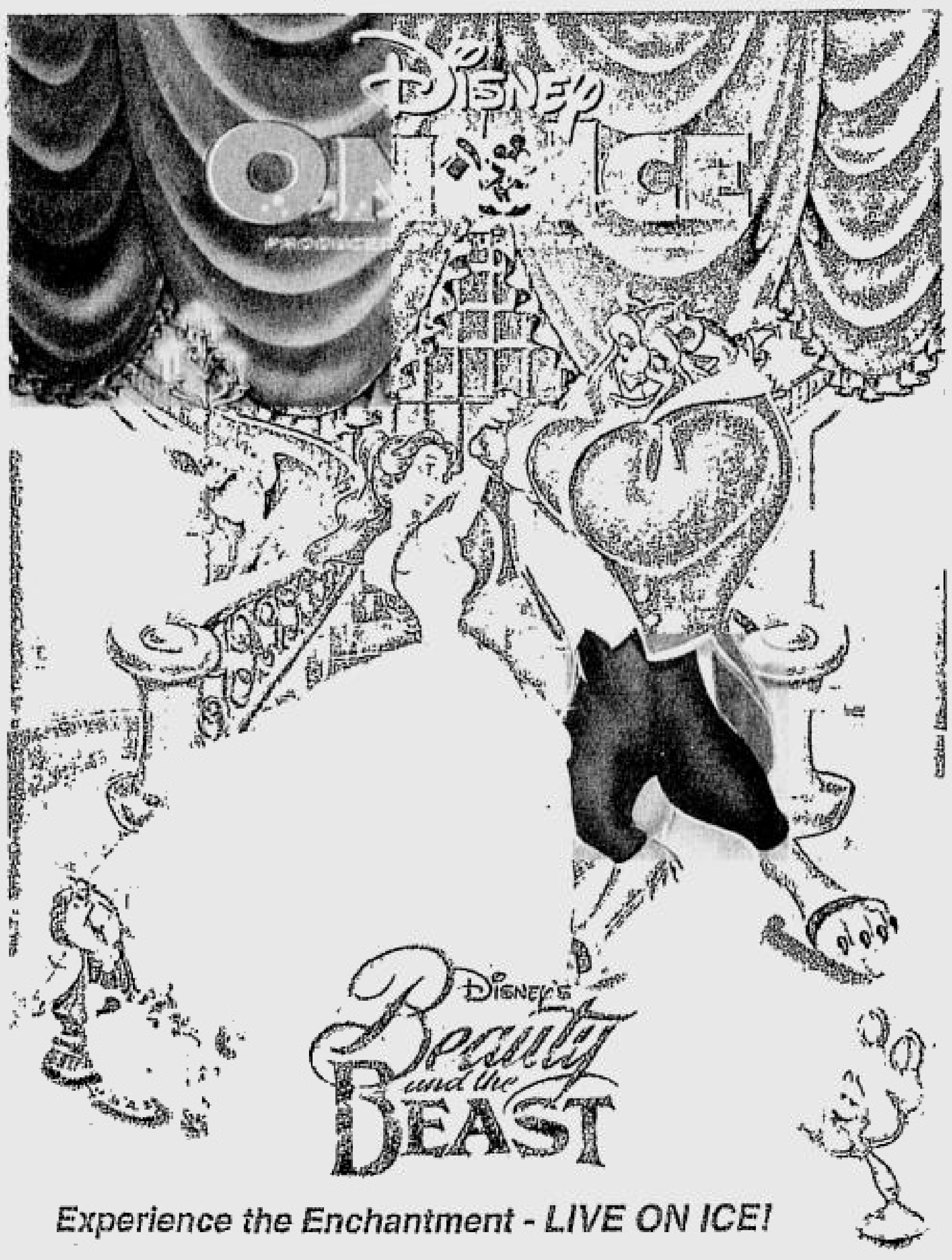

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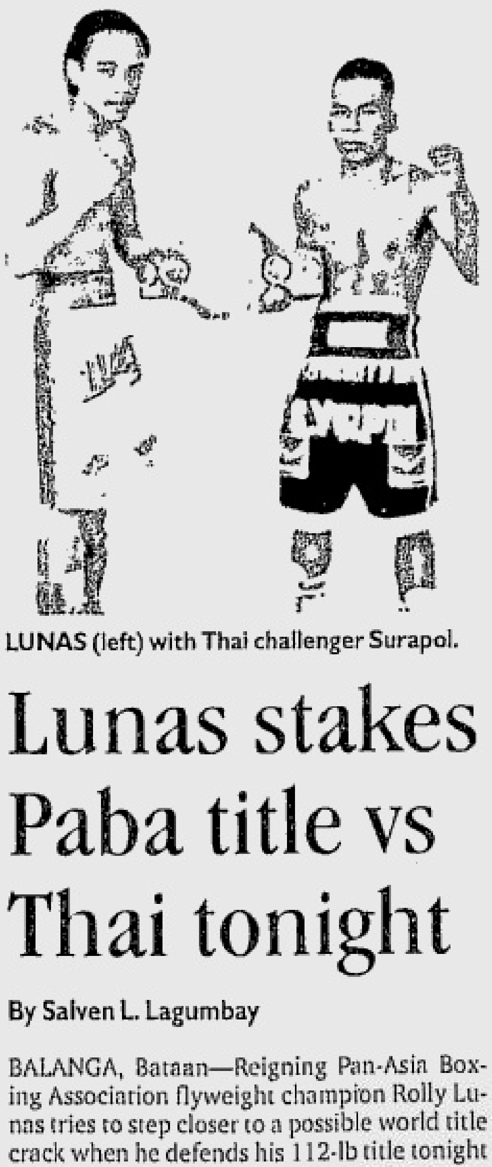

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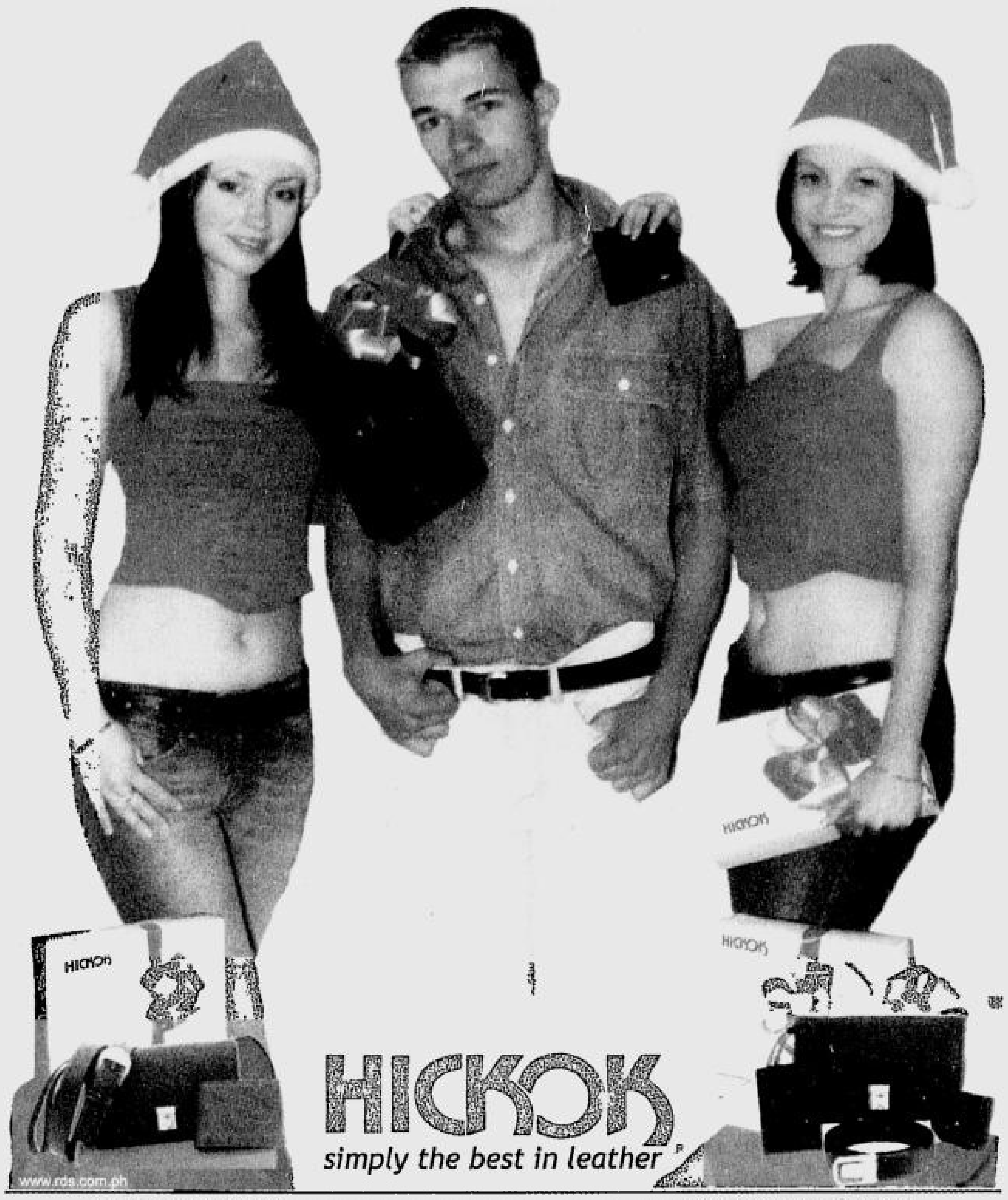

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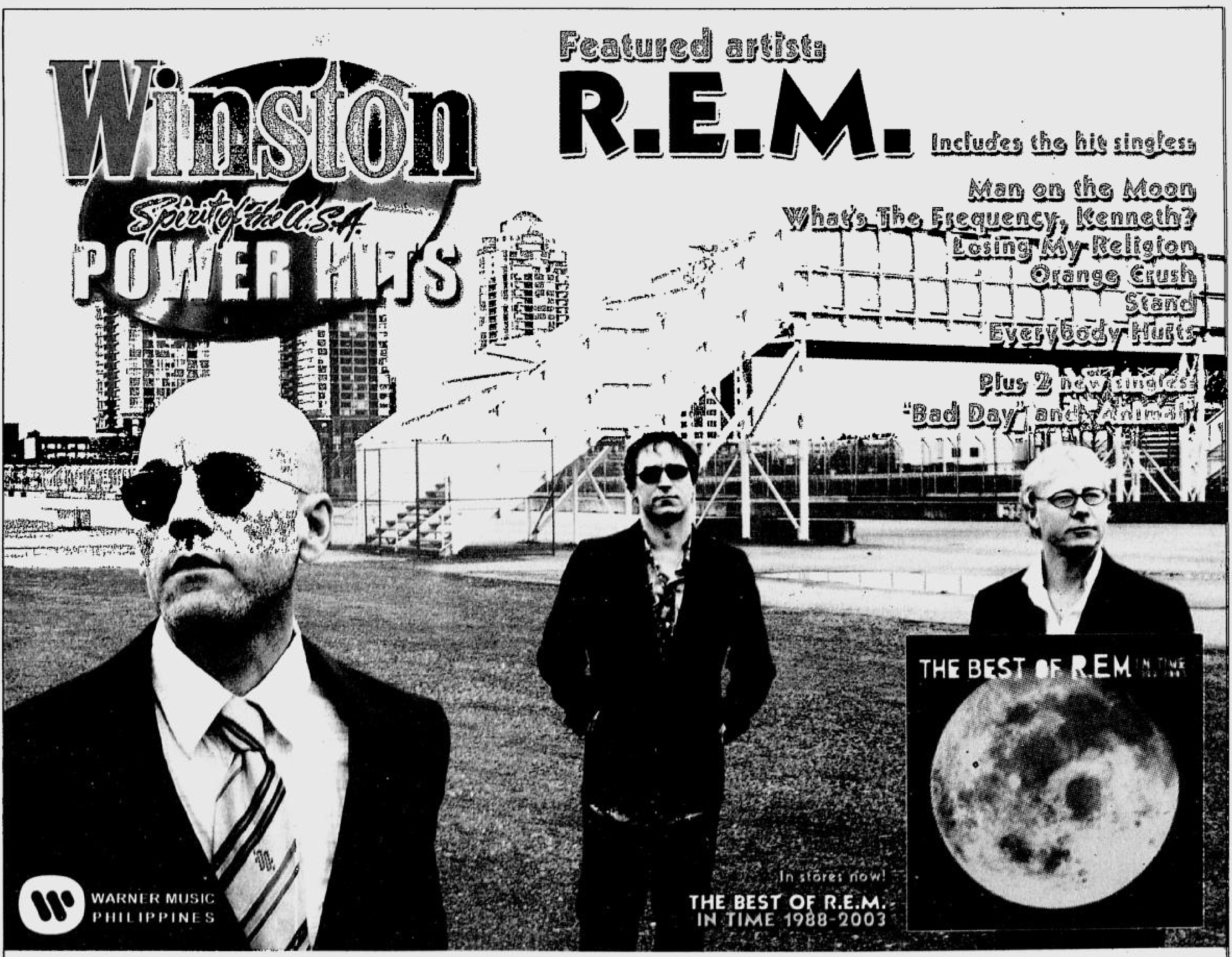

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**By June Navarro**

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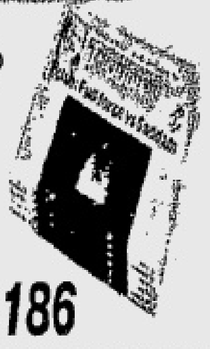

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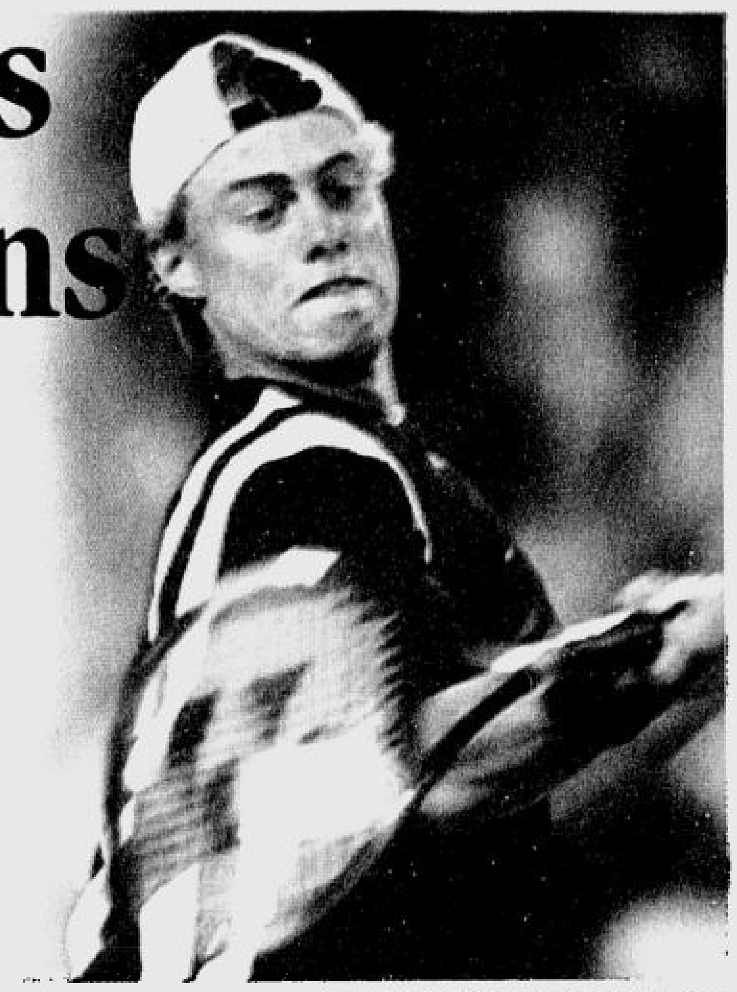

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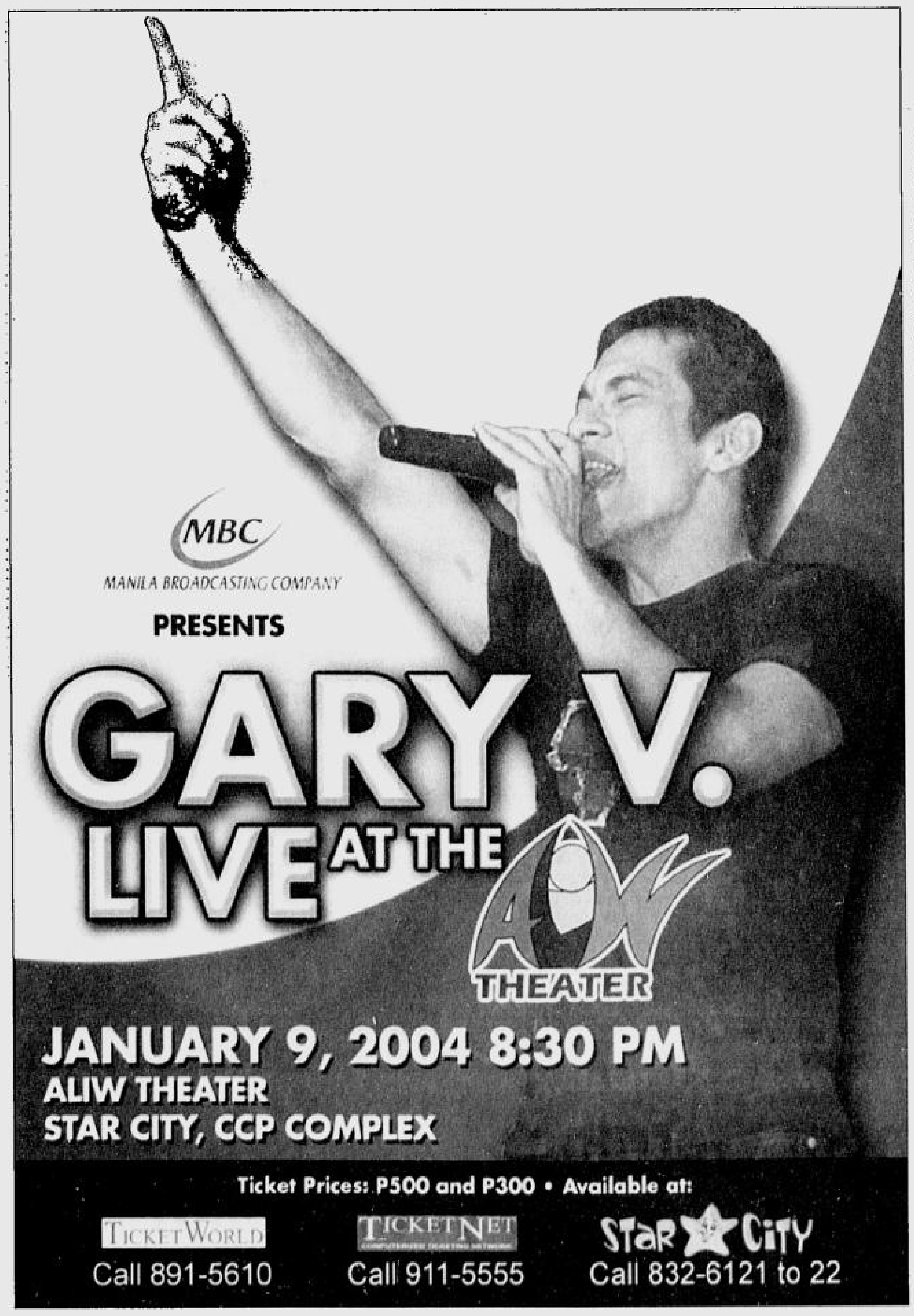

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**GOLD CUP WINNER**

**HORSEOWNER Francis Trillana (third from left) proudly holds the prestigious PCSO Presidential Gold Cup trophy following the victory of his horse, Red Star Rising, in the coveted classic last Sunday at the San Lazaro Leisure Park. Joining him in the post-race celebration were (from left) MJCI president and chief executive Alfonso Reyno Jr., Pampanga Vice Governor and President Macapagal-Arroyo's representative Mikey Arroyo, PCSO chair Ma. Livia "Honeygirl" de Leon, Senate President Frank Drilon, Philracom chair Jimmy Dilag (partly hidden) and Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Avelino Cruz.**

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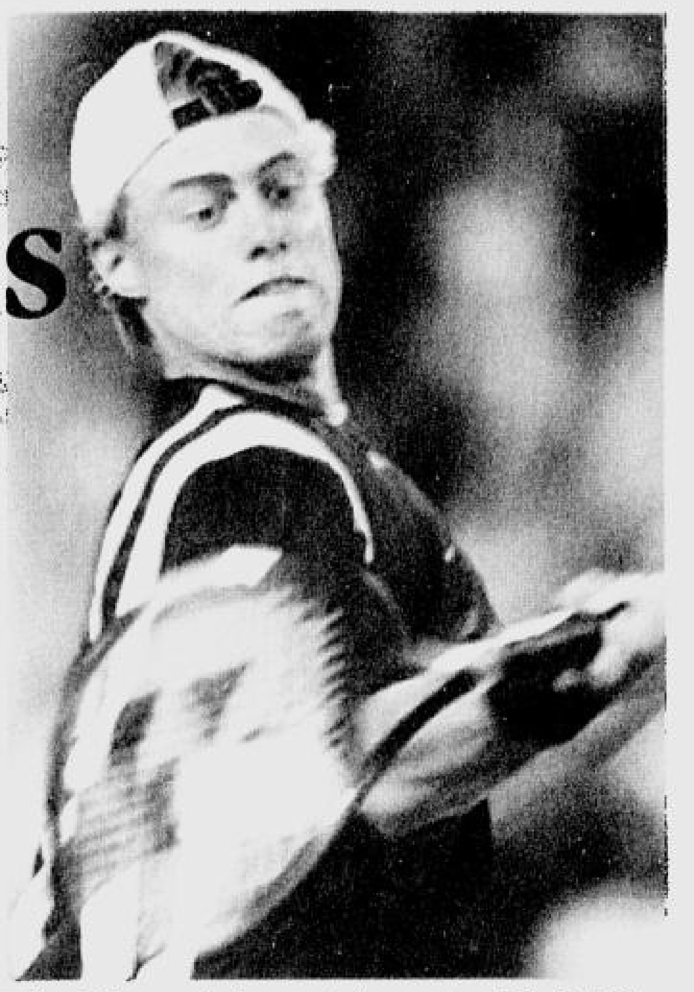

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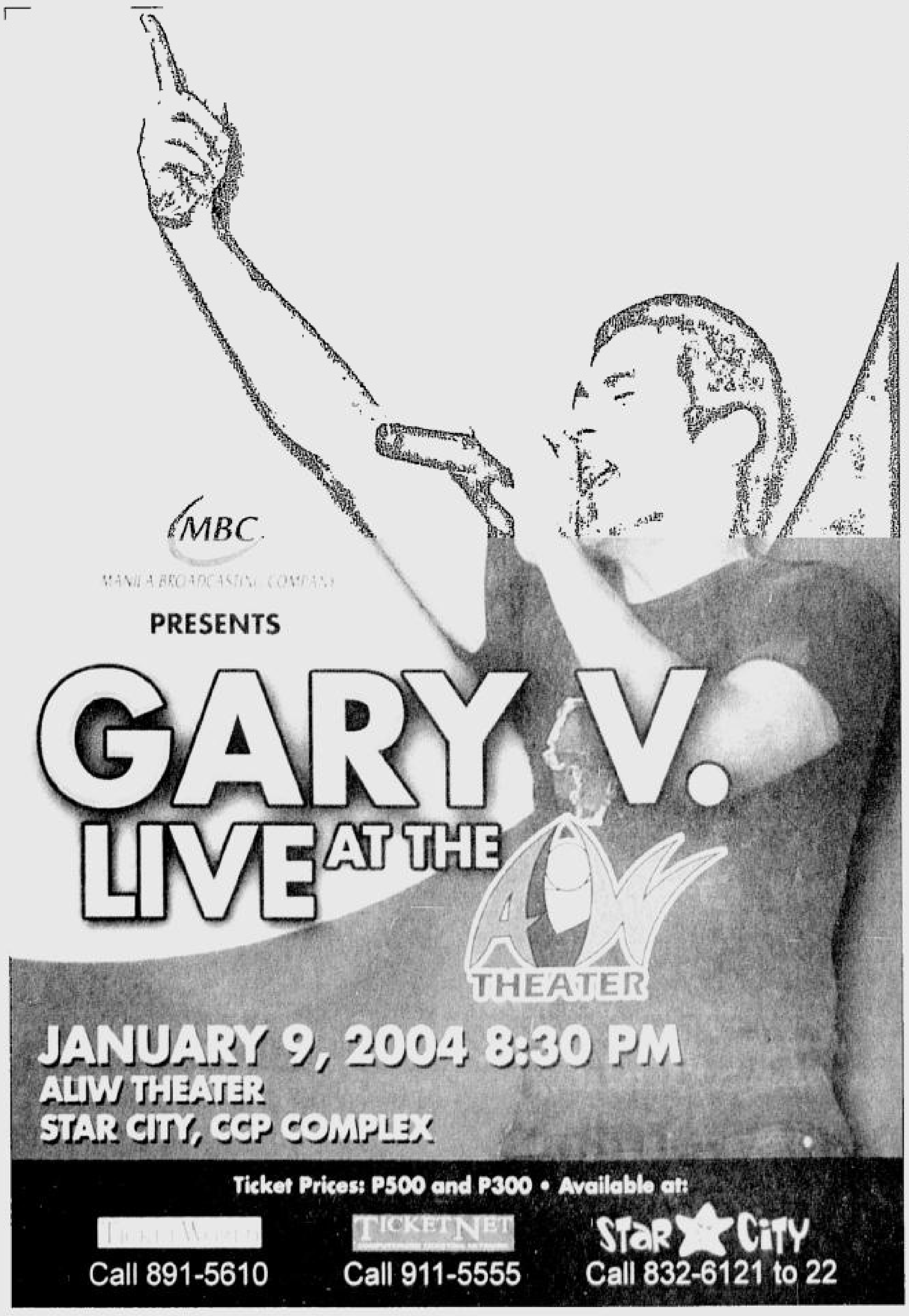

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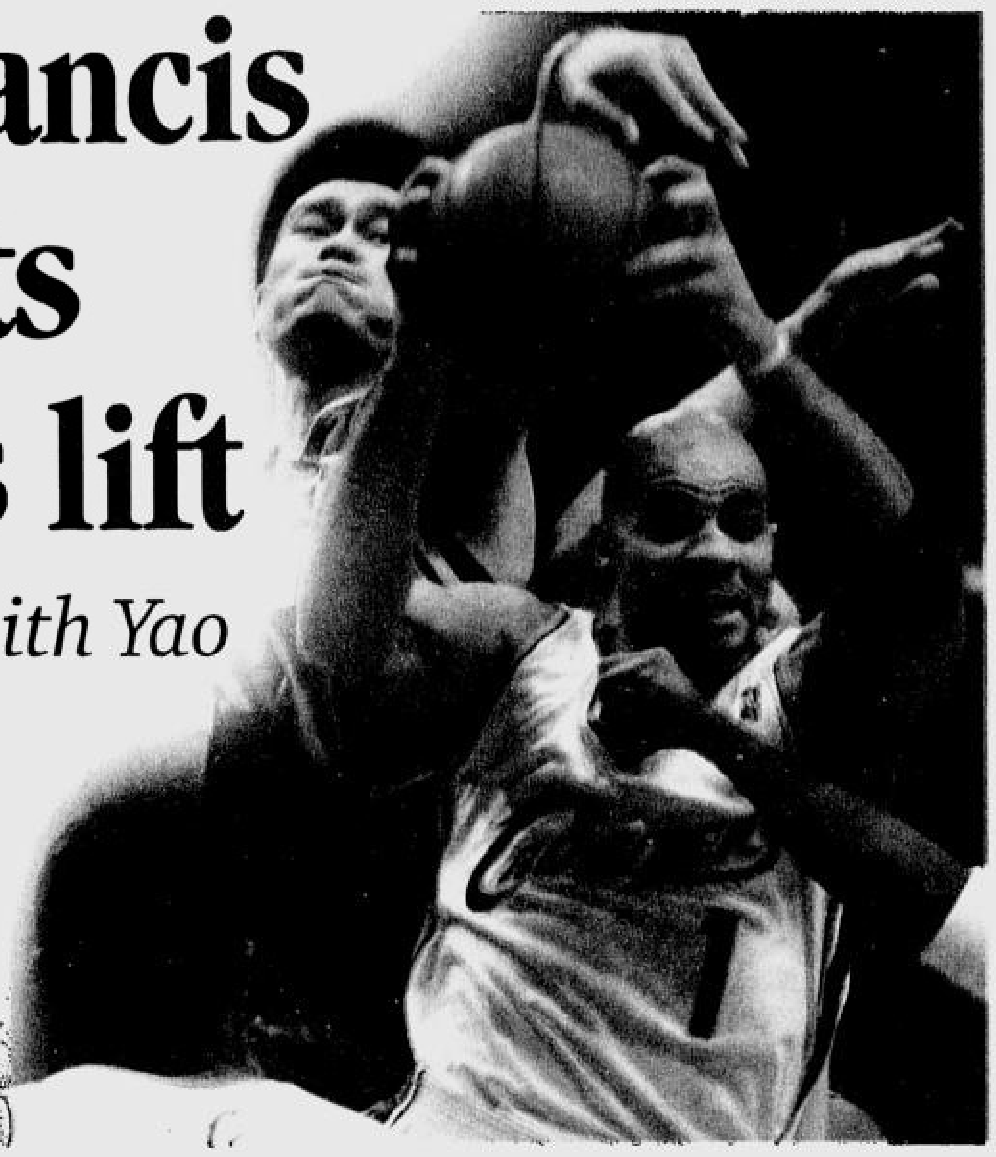
# Mobley, Francis give Rockets 3-mendous lift

## *James wins matchup with Yao*



**CLEVELAND Cavaliers forward Carlos Boozer takes a rebound away from Houston Rockets center Yao Ming, from China, in their NBA game at Gund Arena.** REUTERS

CLEVELAND—Cuttino Mobley and Steve Francis scored 18 points each and both made big 3-pointers down the stretch Wednesday as the Houston Rockets rallied for an 89-85 win over the Cleveland Cavaliers.

Francis made four freethrows in the final 16 seconds for the Rockets, who used a late 12-0 spurt to make up a seven-point deficit in the fourth quarter.

"We've all felt every loss we've had in the last three games," said Francis, who added nine assists in 45 minutes. "We showed more spirit and will as far as guys not wanting to lose."

Maurice Taylor added 14 points as Houston snapped a three-game losing streak.

"When it was 78-71, we were just thinking positive," Mobley said. "Think positive, that's all we had to do. And play hard."

Cavs rookie LeBron James won the matchup of the NBA's last two No. 1 overall draft picks, outscoring Yao Ming 17-12. Cleveland has lost 12 of 14.

### Sixers 87, Heat 76

In Philadelphia, Aaron McKie scored 20 points and Glenn Robinson had 19 in Philadelphia's victory over Miami.

The Sixers, playing without Allen Iverson, snapped a two-game losing streak. Iverson has missed three of four games with a swollen right knee, an injury that could keep him sidelined even longer.

Dwayne Wade scored 22 points and Eddie Jones added 20 for the Heat, who had a four-game winning streak snapped. The Heat, who started 0-7, had the longest winning streak in the Eastern Conference, but their momentum stalled on the road where they are only 2-12.

### Warriors 98, Hawks 85

In Atlanta, Mike Dunleavy made five of Golden State's season-high 10 3-pointers, scored 25 points, and grabbed 14 rebounds as the Warriors overcame the Atlanta Hawks.

Jason Richardson added 22 points for the Warriors, who were 10-for-21 on 3-pointers and outscored the Hawks 30-0 from 3-point range. Golden State has won consecutive road games for the first time this season.

Shareef Abdur-Rahim scored 16 points for the Hawks, who have lost five straight and 11 of 13.

Atlanta coach Terry Stotts benched starters Jason Terry and Theo Ratliff for the start of both halves after they were late for a pregame walkthrough.

### Magic 94, Pacers 90

In Indianapolis, Rod Strickland's jump shot with 14.4 seconds left lifted Orlando over Indiana, 94-90.

Al Harrington missed a wide-open jumper from the left wing with seven seconds remaining that would have given Indiana the lead.

Jermaine O'Neal had 24 points, 17 rebounds and five blocks for the Pacers.

Other NBA results: Pistons 77, Bulls 73; Spurs 73, Raptors 70; Celtics 105, Mavericks 103; Clippers 93, Bucks 83; Nets 87, Jazz 74. AP

# Que fires 4-under 68 in Okinawa Open

WITH no option left but a victory to avoid going back to qualifying school, Angelo Que is on a special mission in the Asia-Japan Okinawa Open.

Yesterday, Que opened his bid in the $950,000 tourney jointly sanctioned by the Japan Tour and the Asian PGA with a bogey-free four-under-par 68 at the 7,002-yard Southern Links Golf Club to keep himself in the title chase.

Que, who failed to keep his card in the Asian Tour after a forgettable rookie season, birdied the seventh

and ninth holes then eagled the 11th hole to share 17th place with eight others.

Que's big group was five shots behind Masashi "Jumbo" Ozaki who torched the course with 10 birdies, including four in a row from the 13th, en route to a 63 and a two shot lead over Singapore's Lam Chih Bing and Hiroshi Boda.

Frankie Minoza submitted a 70 on three birdies and was among those in 43rd spot, seven shots off the pace.

Danny Zarate could only score a 75 and will need a miracle to survive today's cut-off.

The Okinawa Open features 60 players from both the Japan and Asian Tours plus six sponsor exemptions. It is the only joint-sanction in the Japan Tour calendar the regular 2004 season of which will not kick off until March.

The Asian Tour gets going with its qualifying school next month.

A win by Que in the Okinawa Open gets him an automatic exemption in both Tours. He finished 82nd in 12 events of the 2003 season in place in the money rankings, far off the Top 60 who all kept their cards.

Zarate is also returning to the Q-School after finishing 69th.

Meanwhile, Indian ace Arjun Atwal capped a stellar season at the Annual Asian PGA Tour Gala Dinner recently, earning the prestigious Player of the Year award as well as the Order of Merit title.

Atwal, who created history by becoming the first Indian player to earn a US PGA Tour card from Qualifying School, was given the vote by his fellow players for his tremendous year. Jong Arcano

**BERARDELLI CHAMPS:** Team manager Oscar Medalla (center, left) and Tonypet Albano (center, right) hold the Berardelli Cup after the Covenant Team won the Competition Class over La Salle Dasma in the recent 2003 Bro. Dominic Berardelli La Salle Alumni basketball league held at the St. Benilde's Gym of La Salle Greenhills. Covenant has won the crown four times, the last three in 1997, 1999 and 2001. Dasma ruled the Fellowship Class, while Team Batch '81 bagged the Seniors Class title.

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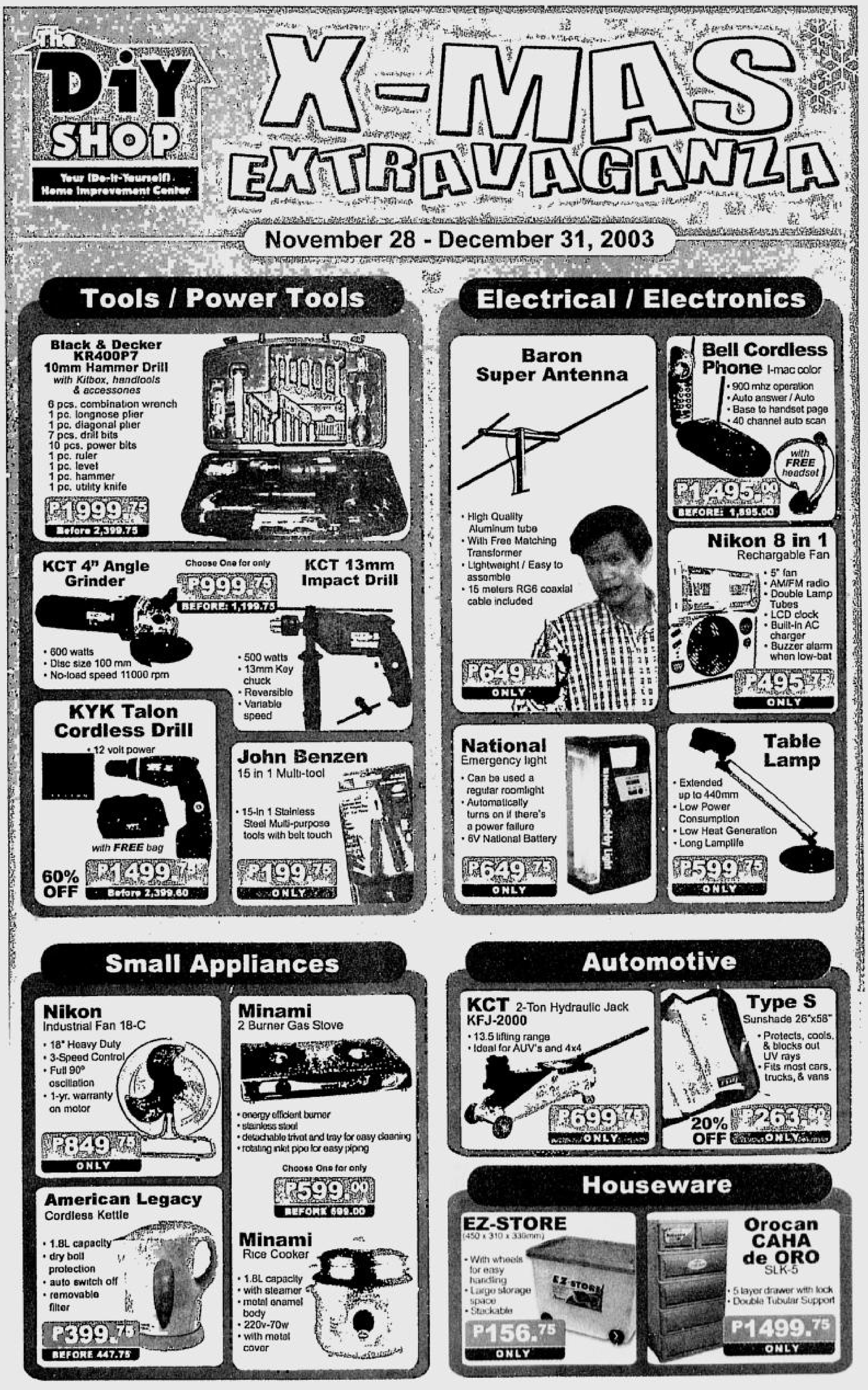

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ASIAN AQUATHLON

# Macasieb, HK bet split top honors

HOST Philippines and Hong Kong split honors at the Speedo-Asian Aquathlon Championship held at the picturesque Pearl of the Pacific Resort in Boracay in Aklan recently.

Fil-Am Arland Macasieb, a former national duathlon champion in Subic, added the elite men's Asian Aquathlon and the national aquathlon championships to his collection of titles.

HK's Lemuel Lau Ching Yin claimed line honors by crossing the finish to win the under-23 elite crown in 58:15, exactly 40 seconds ahead of Macasieb, who was second overall.

"It was a challenging race, a beach run and a trail run combined, but I really expected to win the race," said Ching Yin, 20, a professional triathlete and one of HK's top ranked triathletes.

Philippine bets Eldy Banluta and Francis Mercado finished second and third in the under-23 elite, clocking 1:03.27 and 1:12.24, respectively.

In the men's elite, Macasieb, 28, caught up with HK's Ho King Fun, in the last 750 meters of the 7K trail run leg of the run-swim-run event.

"If the race were a bit longer, I could have caught up with the other Hong Kong guy but it was difficult to run fast in the shifting sand," explained Macasieb, who was followed home by Japanese expat Hiroshi Takei and RP team member Abet Biagan in the elite group.

Runners-up in the national aquathlon championship were Jinno Salvacion and Biagan.

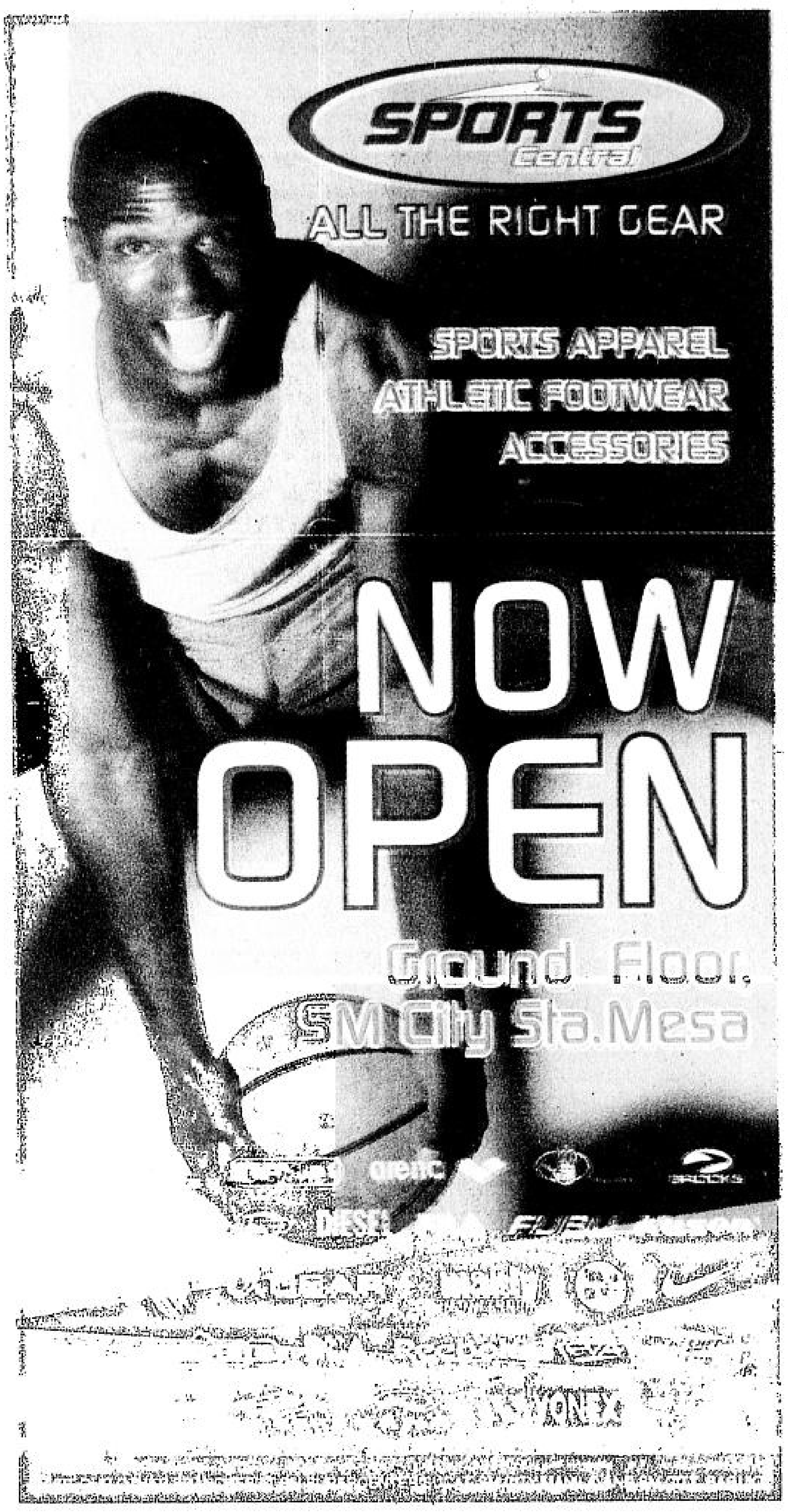
In the female under-23 elite, 16-year-old high school student and national training pool member Josephine Pilapil won in 1:08.34 followed by Singapore's Jeanette Wang, 1:13.09, and Astrud Valdez, 1:18.51.

Pilapil also emerged winner in the national women's aquathlon championship with RP swimmer Jenny Guerrero, just back from the Vietnam SEA Games, second in 1:09.09, and Celine Langit third in 1:11.32.

The Fuji Mountain Bike Race winners were Iloilo's Delun Lunasco and Alexandra Ganzon, also from Iloilo; the Speedo Open Water Swim champions were UP-Diliman's Evan Gabrador and Loveleinel Casidsid of Iloilo, the Nike Trail Run champions were Perlito Ibanez from Laguna and Ganzon again while Hey Jude finished first in the Ultimate Frisbee team championship. Cecile Asuncion from Speedo won the Fuji-backed on-the-spot photo contest.

The event was co-sponsored by Fuji-YKL, Nike, David's Salon, Spa, Gatorade, The Mobile Media, Corporate Air, PSC, Powerbar, and Mirror Magazine, and organized by the Alternative Events Group together with the Cyclone Bikers club of Boracay, which is involved in promoting awareness for the preservation of the island's flying foxes or fruit bats.

Other support sponsors in the TRAP and ASTC-sanctioned Speedo Asian Aquathlon and Boracay Multi Sports Festival were the local government of Malay, Enervon, Alaska, POC, Polar Heart rate Monitor, Coppertone, and local resorts Boracay Regency, Crystal Sands, Sandcastles and Waling Waling.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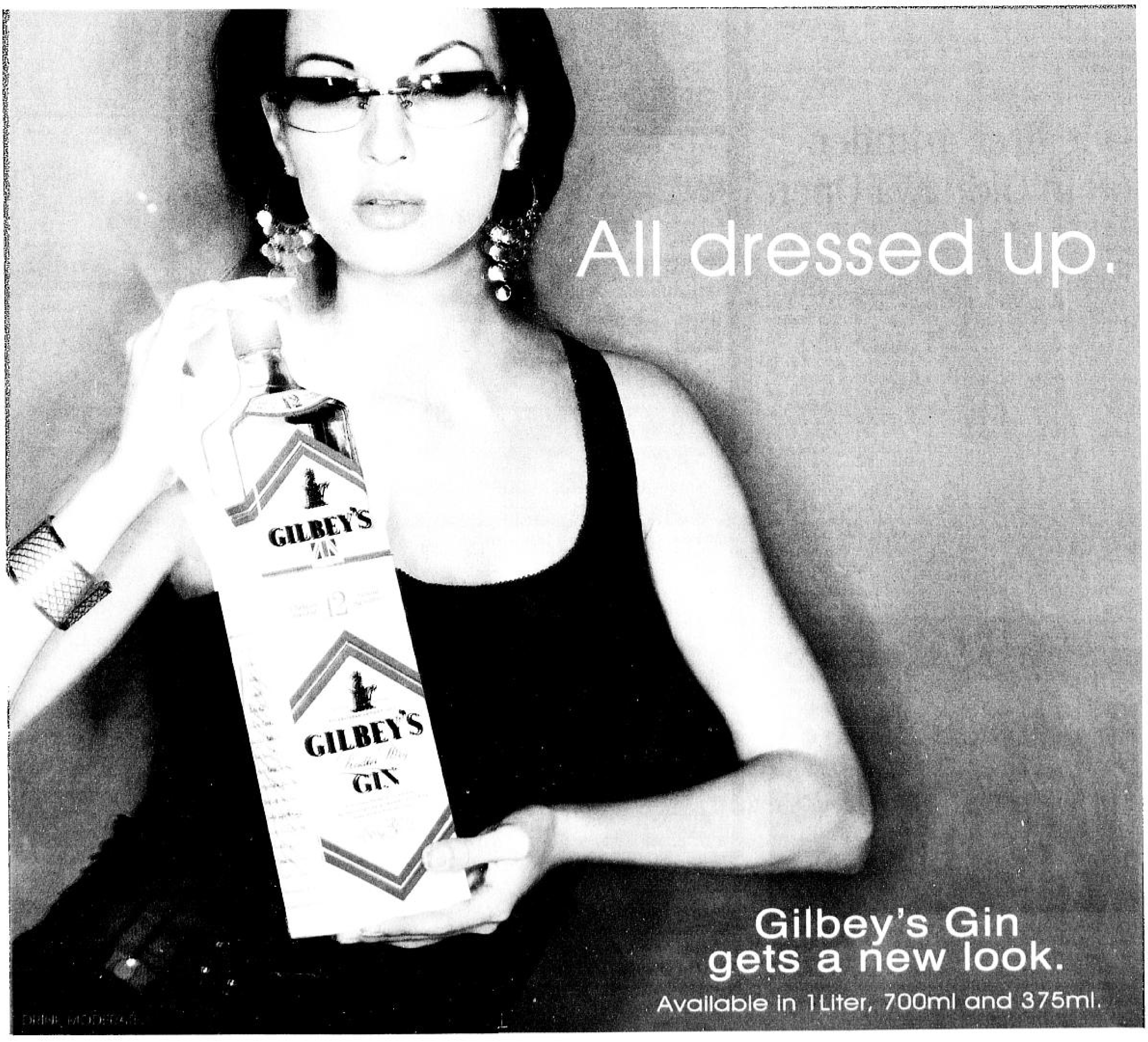
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# IMF raises RP growth forecast for 2004

By Clarissa S. Batino

**GROWTH of the Philippine economy will accelerate in 2004 after hitting 4 percent in 2003, but crucial reforms must still be carried out, the resident representative of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said.**

IMF representative Masahiko Takeda warned the fund would have to continue its "post-program monitoring" of the Philippine economy, an apparent sign of uncertainty over the implementation of economic reforms.

Takeda said that gross domestic product (GDP) growth would improve to 4.25 percent in 2004, up from the fund's original forecast of 4 percent growth for next year.

The government is confident GDP will hit at least 4.2 percent this year and are expecting growth to range from 4.9 to 5.8 percent in 2004.

Takeda told reporters the economy had shown "resilience" in weathering the effects of the Iraq war, the SARS outbreak and bad weather which hurt agriculture in the first half of the year.

The upturn in the global economy next year will likely buoy the Philippine economy further, he added.

But he warned that "a series of events since July has led to renewed pressure on the peso, sovereign bond spreads and domestic interest rates."

This was an apparent reference to the short-lived coup attempt by military rebels in July and various political conflicts with the opposition in Congress.

"Inflows of foreign direct investments have been constrained by competition from within the region, as well as concerns about the business environment," the official said.

The IMF praised improved fiscal performance but stressed the government must push through with other controversial revenue measures possibly including an increase in the value-added tax and a tax on the popular cellphone text messages.

"Consideration should be given to specific policy measures such as raising and indexing excise taxes on alcohol, tobacco and petroleum products in addition to other possible steps," Takeda said.

"It will also be important to resist proposals for new tax amnesties given the harmful impact that repeated amnesties have on taxpayer compliance."

He also warned the country's power sector remained a serious problem with the state-run generator, National Power Corp., suffering increasing losses.

Takeda said the government was not seeking a new credit program with the IMF with both sides agreeing the IMF would continue its "post program monitoring."

"We have come to an agreement. It is a mutual comfort level," he said.

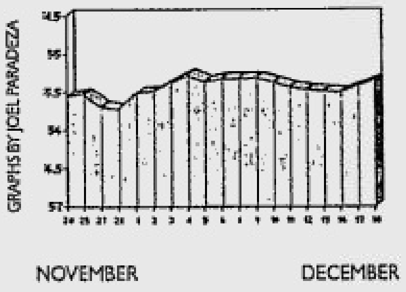
This would entail two regular monitoring missions each year to check on the country's economic indicators and its adherence to a reform program.

He called for the implementation of measures fully privatizing the electrical industry, warning

IMF/ B8

## INDICATORS

### CURRENCIES



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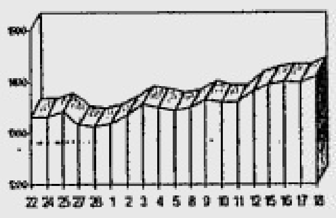
### STOCK MARKET

**PSE COMPOSITE INDEX**



(See stock market report on Page B8)

## Stocks end up on yearend window dressing

SHARES closed at a five-week high yesterday, led by Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT), as players continued their portfolio window-dressing before the year ends.

But traders said the market's slow rise may also attract profit-taking, particularly by those wanting to secure their money ahead of the long Christmas holidays.

There are only five trading days left in 2003 after the government declared Dec. 24, 26 and 31 as holidays.

The main stock index climbed 12.21 points or 0.87 percent to 1,410.77 points. It was the highest closing level since Nov. 10, pushing the market's gains to 38.53 percent this year.

"It's just window-dressing for the yearend. Most investors are not yet thinking of next year's elections," said Spencer Yap, senior investment analyst at BPI Securities Inc.

"It's likely we will see some correction next week. Some people don't want their money tied up with the extended holiday." Yap said the market was targeting the year-high of 1,435 points in the near term.

Turnover rose slightly to P627.36 million from P612.85 million on Wednesday. Despite the gains in the main index, losers outnumbered gainers 25 to 23, showing the mixed sentiment in the market. *Reuters*

## BSP keeps rates unchanged

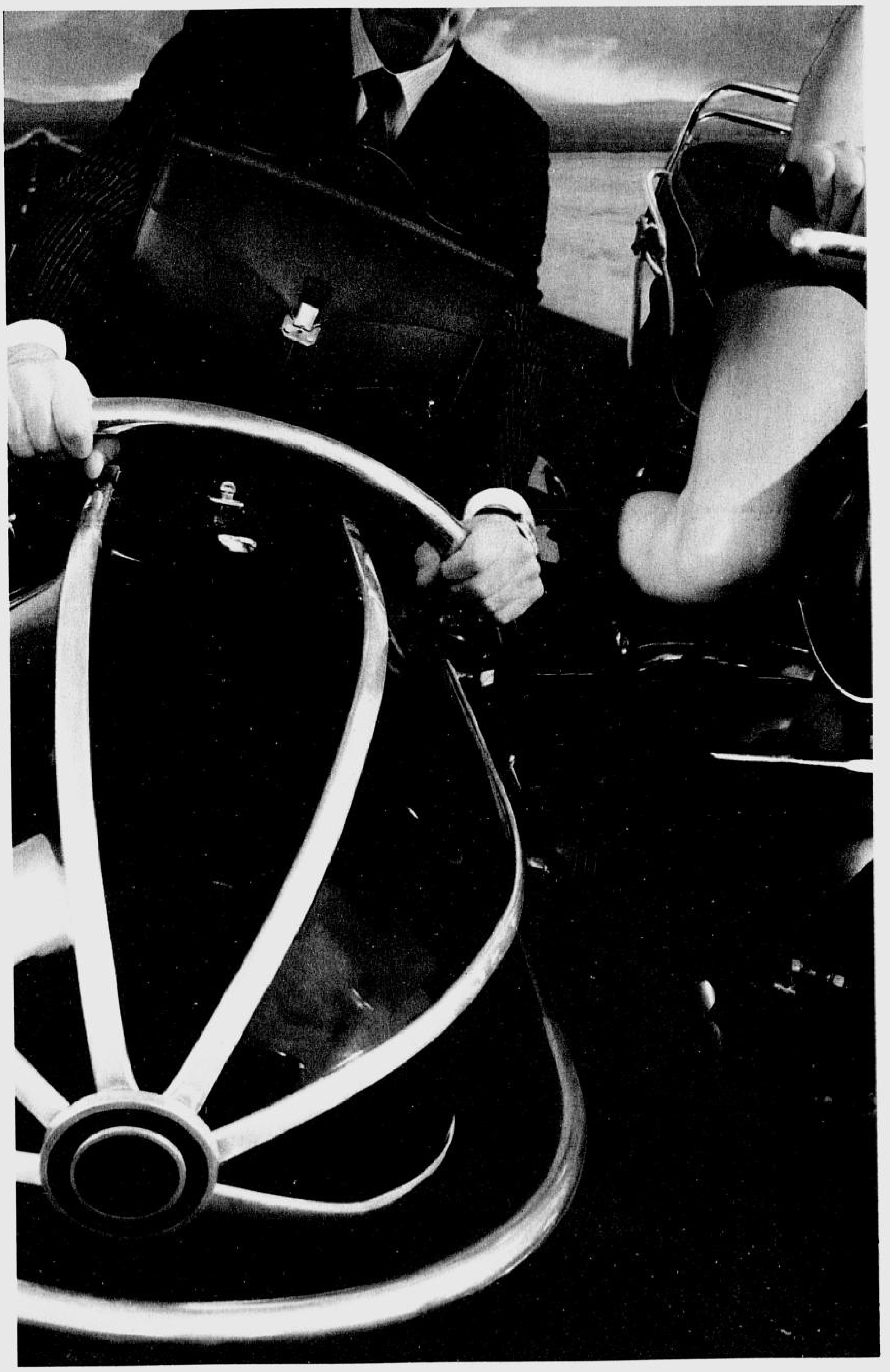
THE POLICY-MAKING Monetary Board of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas has decided to keep its key overnight rates steady at 6.75 percent for borrowing and 9 percent for lending.

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said the current policy rates were sufficient to support the government's growth objectives while keeping consumer prices stable.

"Prospective decisions on the monetary policy stance will continue to preserve a careful balance between caution and the need to ensure that the macroeconomic environment remains conducive to credit demand and investment activity," the BSP chief said.

Buenaventura said monetary authorities saw no need to raise the BSP rates to tame the volatile peso or to bring it down further and help accelerate a slow-moving economy.

"The peso movement is not interest rate-driven. It is sentiment driven and only temporary. Once the candidates have come up with a rational platform that would address the shortcomings of the economy, then the peso would also stabilize," he said. *Clarissa S. Batino*



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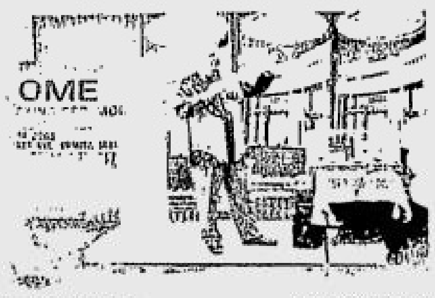

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WELCOME

# Group bids ₱5.2B for Subic project

**By Michelle V. Remo**

THE JAPANESE Shimitsu-Penta Ocean-Toa consortium has moved closer to winning the contract to develop the modernized Subic Bay seaport after it submitted the lowest bid price of P5.2 billion.

Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority Chair Felicito Payumo said the P5.2-billion bid price was P363 million lower than the P5.59 billion offered by its rival bidder and port developer Toyo Corp.

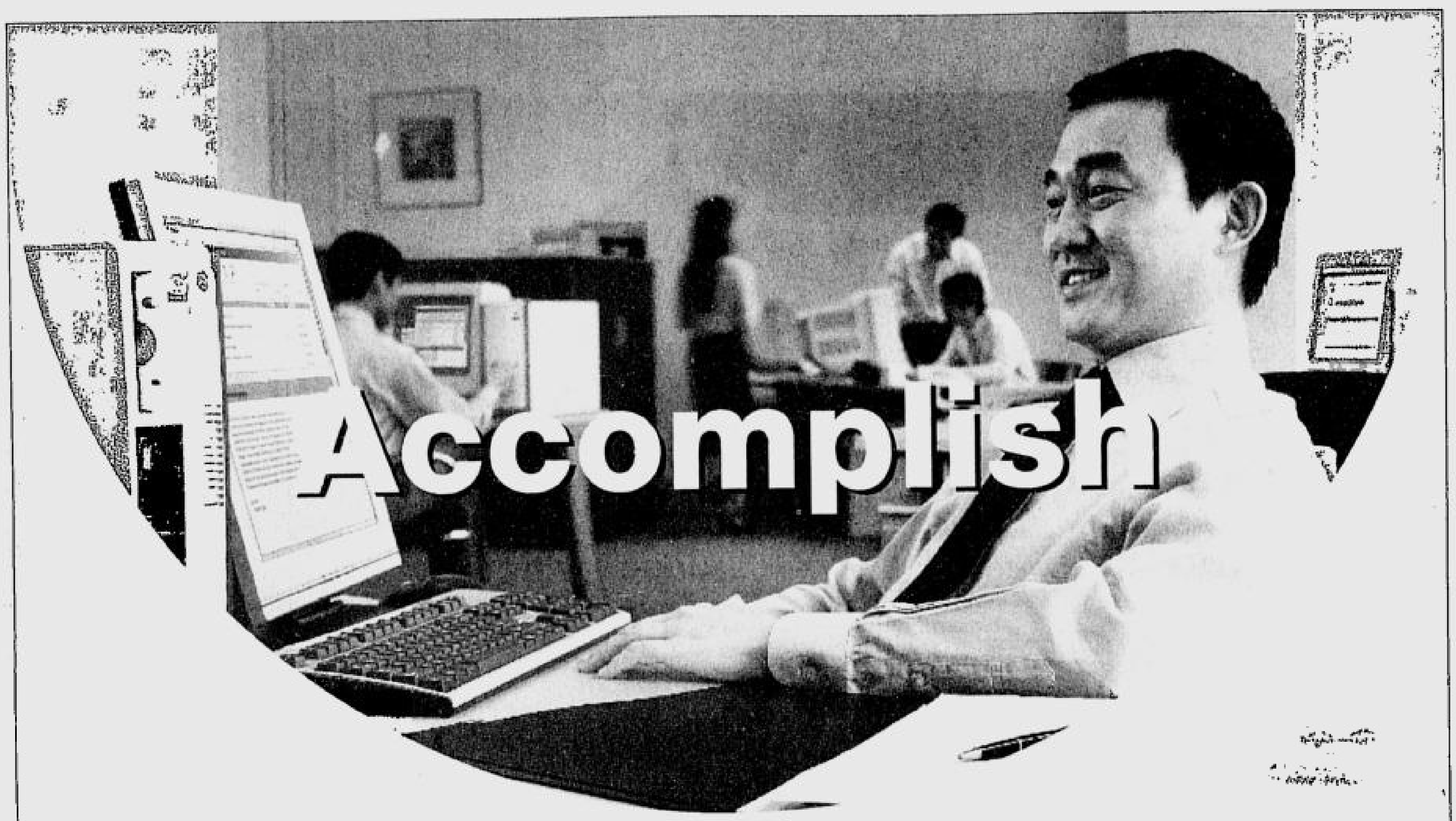
The SBMA has earlier estimated the development contract to cost P6.9 billion.

Payumo said the SBMA would finish its evaluation of the bid documents in 30 days after which the winner will be announced.

The construction of the seaport project, which was expected to encourage the entry of more foreign locators in Subic, is scheduled to begin in April 2004.

The Japan Bank for International Cooperation will finance the seaport project, which is part of the long-term development plan of the SBMA and the Bases Conversion Development Authority for Central Luzon.

BCDA President and Chief Executive Officer Rufo Colayco said in an earlier briefing that the construction of the seaport would complement the Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway Project (SCTEP) in efforts to transform Central Luzon into an "economic enclave" independent of Metro Manila.



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# Metro Pacific cuts debt by ₱500M

**By Doris C. Dumlao**

METRO Pacific Corp., the local holding company of Hong Kong-based First Pacific Co. Ltd., has reduced its unresolved debt burden to between P800 million and P900 million following the retirement of some P500 million in debt through dacion en pago or payment in kind.

MPC president Jose Ma. Lim yesterday told reporters that the remaining unresolved debt stock could be easily managed by the company's cash flows.

"We are on track with our targets," Lim said.

The unresolved debt refers to debt that has not been restructured or retired through dacion en pago arrangements.

MPC used to carry a debt burden of P12.9 billion, but it was reduced by about half when MPC gave up its controlling stake in Bonifacio Land Corp., the developer of the Fort Bonifacio Global City, for P6 billion in favor of the Ayala-Campos group.

MPC also entered into a deal with the Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co. to restructure some P2 billion in debt over restricting deals.

"We're trying to bring debts down to a level which can be sustained by our cash flows," Lim said.

Lim said that MPC preferred these dacion en pago arrangements because it would rid the company of substantial interest payments.

He added that MPC was looking forward to a good year next year depending on MPCs ability to further reduce debt, the entry of a new strategic partner for shipping unit Negros Navigation Co. and the launch of new businesses.

# Oil firms forge agreement on Pandacan depot

**By Abigail L. Ho**

PETRON Corp., Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. and Caltex Phil. Inc. have finalized the terms of the joint operation of the Pandacan oil depot through their joint venture firm, Pandacan Oil Terminals Services Inc.

In a joint statement, the oil firms said they have finalized the commercial agreement governing the management and operation of Potsi, putting them on track with their plan to register the joint venture company by year's end or by early next year.

Each firm will put in at least P500 million to put up the company.

"We are confident that with the commercial agreement in place and the establishment of joint operations for the common distribution facility, the three companies will be better positioned to serve the country's energy needs more efficiently while providing greater security and peace of mind to the residents of Pandacan," Caltex corporate affairs manager Marian Catedral said.

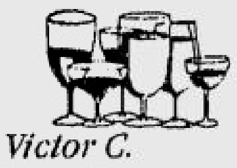
Under a memorandum of understanding signed with the Manila city government last year, the three oil companies are required to dismantle 28 of the 54 tanks in the depot. To date, 26 of the 28 tanks had been decommissioned and dismantled with the last two to follow by March 2004.

The companies also need to set up "green buffer zones" between the tanks and the residential area surrounding the oil terminal. "We firmly believe that the MOU and its provisions remain the most viable long-term option since it addresses the concerns of Pandacan residents while ensuring the stable and uninterrupted supply of petroleum products to the country," Shell external affairs general manager Roberto Kanapi said.

The Pandacan oil depot supplies around 50 percent of Luzon's fuel needs and around 82 percent of Metro Manila's gasoline and diesel requirements.

# China Bank play

## COCKTALES



*Victor C. Agustin*

TAIPAN Henry Sy Sr. is really bent on scooping up stocks of China Bank, despite market rumors that the mall king already has accumulated a slim majority over the Dee-Yuchengco bank.

Following his bit-by-bit buying strategy he has religiously employed since Binondo days, Sy acquired 2,208 China Bank shares last month, even going out to the extent of registering the stocks under his own name.

Despite the steady accumulation, the Sy camp has maintained a no-comment policy on China Bank, especially in the light of a court case filed in October by the Yuchengcos over the disposal of the swing shares held by a Taiwanese bank.

Originally offered to the Yuchengcos, the disputed China Bank shares were instead sold by the Taiwanese bank International Commercial Bank of China to two foreign fund companies through stockbroker Eddie Gobing, a known ally of the Sys.

What is even stranger now is that a week after the Yuchengcos announced their damage suit against the mysterious buyers, Yvonne Yuchengco, daughter of taipan Alfonso Yuchengco who sits in the China Bank board, sold 11 out of the 16 China Bank shares listed in her name.

The Yuchengco daughter, who certainly did not need the money, disposed of the bloc, at P685/share, for a grand total of P7,535. Was the Yuchengco daughter sending a message? She declined to say what, if there is any at all.

### MVP's price target

PLDT started the year at P267.50/share. Yesterday, it closed at P910. How much farther is the resurgent telecom stock going to go?

If you have faith as that of outgoing president Manuel V. Pangilinan, PLDT should go back to the good, old P1,400 level. That's how much MVP paid for the stock when he acquired 2,000 shares two months ago.

Following MVP's action, another PLDT director, Ambassador to Washington Albert del Rosario, last month asked his broker to start accumulating the stock. For the month of November, Del Rosario acquired, according to the grapevine, 14,700 shares of PLDT despite

COCKTALES/ B4

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| Block 10 Lot 10 A&B | (Lauren/Alliage) | 170 sqm | P 596,750 ea |
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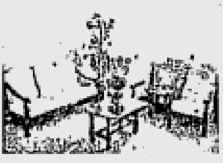

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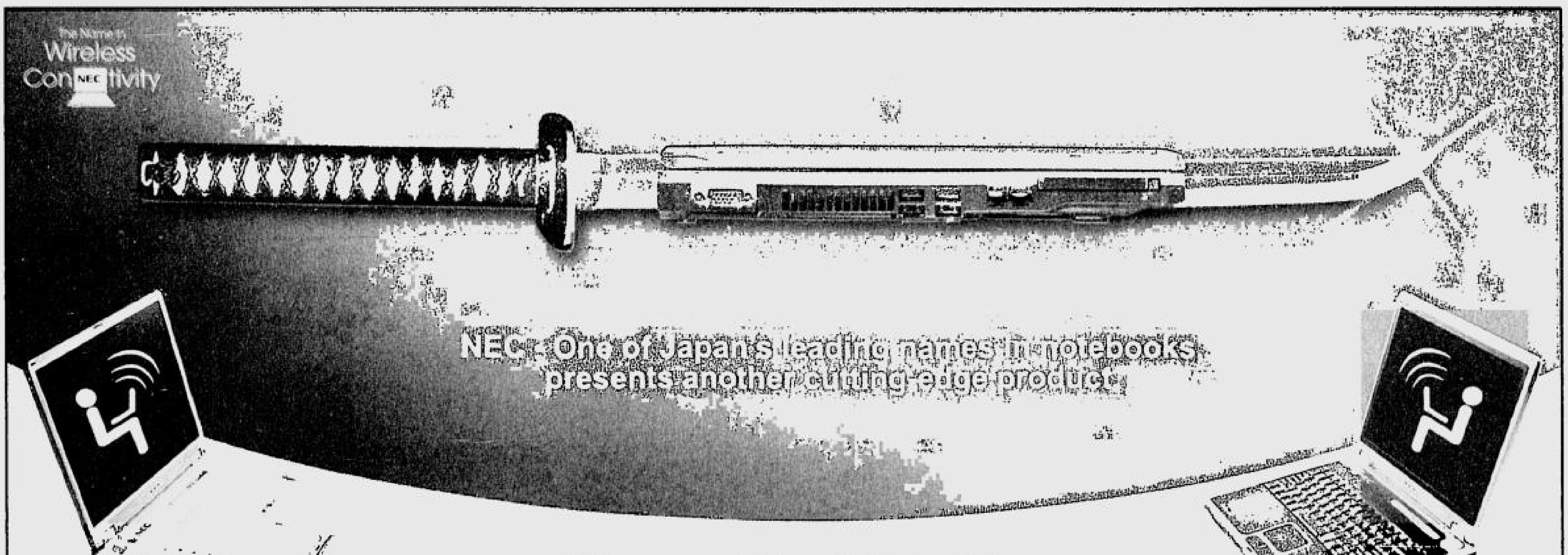
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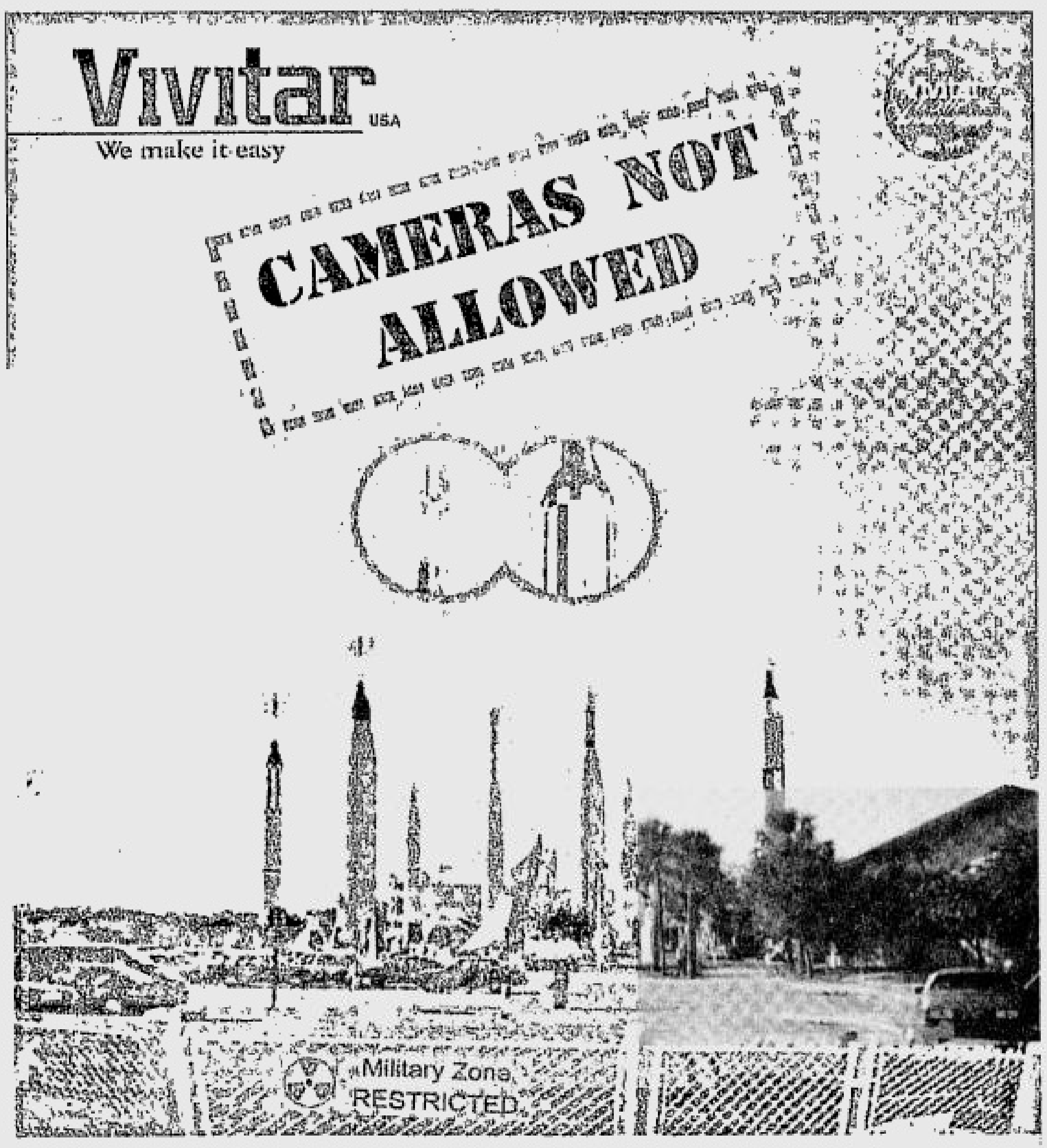

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# Gov't keeps 11-month budget gap within target

**By Clarissa S. Batino**

THE MACAPAGAL administration has contained the budget deficit in the first 11 months to P172.2 billion against a ceiling of P189.7 billion due to strong revenue collection and restrained spending.

Preliminary data showed that the budget gap in November stood at only P8.33 billion, or less than half of the P17.8-billion target.

"Our deficit as of November is at P172 billion. We have a P30-billion headroom with only a month to go," said Finance Secretary Juanita Amatong.

As of October, the gap between revenues and expenditures stood at P163.88 billion or P8 billion lower than the ceiling of P171.88 billion for the 10-month period. By November, the headroom had increased to about P17.5 billion against the target.

Amatong said the good fiscal performance in November would bolster the government's bid to bring down the deficit this year even below the P202-billion ceiling and the P210.7 billion a year ago.

Revenues exceeded the P54.4-billion goal in November by about P4 billion while expenditures fell more than P5 billion below the program of P72.2 billion last month.

After exceeding spending targets from July to October, the budget department tightened its hold on disbursement and capped expenditures way below the ceiling.

National Treasurer Sergio Edeza earlier said that the budget deficit this year would be below P200 billion.

This year could be the first time in five years that the government would bring down its budget deficit below the original target. Last year, the Macapagal administration blew three deficit targets and ended the year with a shortfall of P210.7 billion against the original ceiling of P130 billion.

This month, however, expenditures are seen to spike to finance an unprogrammed P5-billion cash gift to government employees. Even with the additional spending, however, Edeza said the government would not exceed the P202-billion deficit target.

# Cocktales ...

From page B3

his being halfway round the world.

That puts the diplomat's PLDT portfolio at 63,525 shares, nearly twice as that of MVP's 37,719 shares. The hard-driving Smart marketing executive, Anastacio "Boy" Martirez, tries to come close to MVP at 30, 577 shares.

Incidentally, at P910/share, Del Rosario's PLDT nest egg has grown to more than P57.8 million.

## Buy high, sell low

ARE domestic concerns clouding Andres Soriano III's decisions? Is he getting his stock market tips from Dante Tan?

Despite being a director of ICTSI, ASIII last month dumped all in a day more than 3.2 million shares of the lightly traded ICTSI for P3.15 each.

Instead of going down, the price of ICTSI held on and even inched up higher the following days.

Last week, ASIII resorted to slowly buying back the same shares, but now at P3.20-P3.30 range.

## Heard through the grapevine

AT 2 percent of the expected 2003 profits of P7 billion, the total Christmas bonus for the 15-member board of San Miguel Corp. should reach P140 million. That's more than P9.33 million per director, assuming the board decides to split the good tidings evenly.

*(Cocktales may be reached by e-mail at cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or at cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)*

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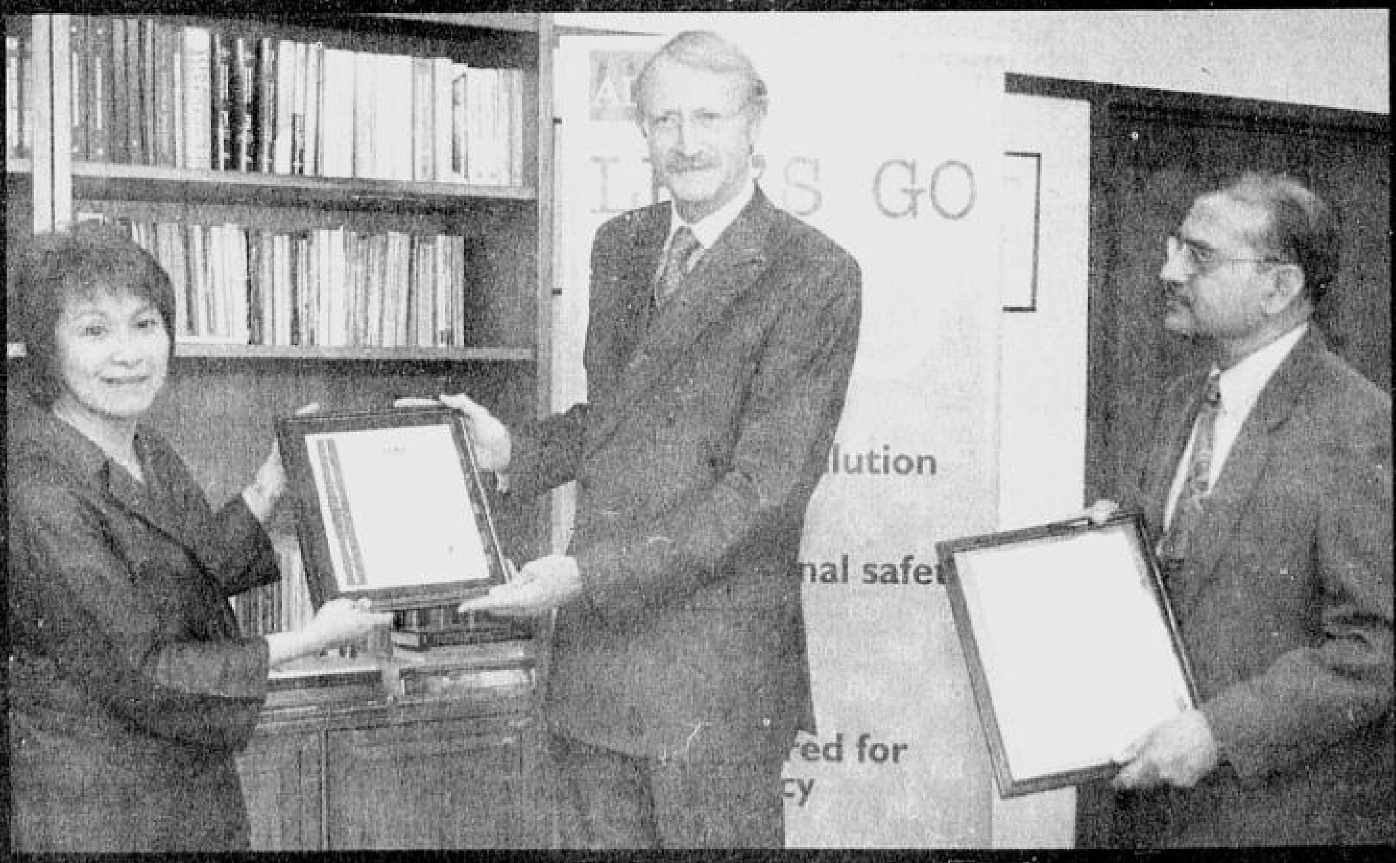

LANDMARK ACHIEVEMENT ADB Vice-President (Finance and Administration) John Lintjer (center) and Asad Shah, Director General of ADB's Office of Administrative Services, accept ISO and OHSAS certificates from Jocelyn de los Reyes, General Manager, TUV Product Service Asia-Pacific, Philippine Branch, the ISO and OHSAS external auditor.

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**COMMENTARY**

# Christmas for the swine industry

By Ernesto M. Ordoñez

THIS Christmas will be a happy one for people in the swine industry. The reason is that farm gate prices in provinces like Laguna, Rizal and Pampanga are now at P74-P76 a kilo. This is a welcome increase from a low of P54-P56 a kilo last year before the smuggling of pork was curbed, thanks to the combined efforts of the government and vigilant farmer leaders.

But for Dr. Hospicio Timbol, the technical committee chair of the National Federation of Hog Farmers Inc. (NFHFI), it will be a bleak Christmas unless something happens quickly in the Senate.

Dr. Timbol said, "Ever since we allowed the importation of meat products from foot and mouth disease (FMD)-infested countries 10 years ago, we have wanted an anti-FMD bill that would stop this practice that poses contamination threat to the local swine industry. We had one passed by the House of Representatives. In spite of this, the Senate version (SB 1004) is still with the Senate committee on agriculture. If not presented to the full Senate for deliberation soon, we may have to wait for another three years because we will have newly elected legislators whom we have to orient from scratch. Meanwhile, a major FMD outbreak may occur because of this inaction."

## Losses due to FMD

In fact, two years after the importation from FMD countries started, the swine industry experienced P2 billion in losses from 1,554 FMD outbreaks with 98,604 reported cases. This was so damaging that then President Fidel Ramos declared Luzon, where the FMD outbreaks largely occurred, a calamity area under EO 251.

Since then, efforts have been made to eradicate FMD. Today, more than P1.2 billion is spent annually on anti-FMD vaccines. If our country were FMD-free, this expense would be eliminated and passed on to consumers for lower pork prices. To the Department of Agriculture's credit, Visayas and Mindanao, as well as Palawan and Masbate, are now FMD-free.

## Increased importation

But according to NFHFI president Albert Lim Jr., this improved FMD situation is seriously threatened by the increasing importation of meat from FMD-infested countries, particularly India. From only nine million kilos in 1993, meat imports rose to 55 million kilos last year. That same year, India had a staggering 3,086 FMD outbreaks, with 67,437 reported cases. And though India is a world leader in appropriate technology and low-priced drugs, this success is not present in their control of FMD. As a result, most countries ban Indian carabeef imports, with the Philippines as one of the few exceptions.

Lim contends that importing Indian carabeef poses a very serious threat to the swine industry. This not only endangers the livelihood that affects the 3.8 million people dependent on this industry. There is also the loss of potential jobs from the possible exports of our swine products.

In a Senate hearing last Oct. 28, Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo cited two examples of this: "There was an attempt to export frozen fresh pork to Singapore, but it did not push through because of the FMD issue. In Malaysia, arrangements were made to export ice cream. But this was not approved by the Malaysian Veterinary Services Department due to FMD presence."

## The other side

There is, however, another side to this debate. According to Francisco Buencamino, executive director of the Philippine Association of Meat Processors, there are internationally approved ways of importing from FMD-infested countries without the risk of FMD contamination. If these are strictly followed, the benefit to consumers is tremendous. Indian carabeef sells for P80 a kilo, less than half of the P170 a kilo for beef rump today. If the meat processors are no longer allowed to import Indian carabeef, the price of a can of corned beef will increase by approximately 50 percent, since the beef raw material constitutes half of the total product's price. Buencamino believes the solution is to ensure that the measures to prevent FMD contamination are followed, and not to ban these imports. The farmers will argue that if these measures are not effective, they will continue to oppose these imports, and they will be justified in doing so.

So far, the farmers have shown a refreshing openness to changes in their original position. Last Dec. 8, conceding that cooking these meat products would minimize the risk of FMD contamination, they are now advocating a ban on fresh and frozen meat products from FMD countries. This openness can be harnessed in coming out with a law that will achieve both agriculture development and consumer welfare objectives. That a law is in fact needed urgently is the position of several groups such as the Philippine Veterinary Drug Association and the Philippine Peasant Institute, which also serves as the secretariat of the Alyansa Agrikultura.

## Recommendation

Last Nov. 11, the Senate committee on agriculture constituted a technical working group to discuss this matter. Aside from government officials, the private sector representatives for the TWG include Timbol, Lim and Buencamino. Up to now, this TWG has not been called to a meeting to thresh out these issues. Thus, Timbol fears a delayed committee report and the consequent death by negligence of this bill. An announcement before Christmas on when this meeting will take place and a commitment that a committee report will be given to the Senate in January make Senate deliberation impossible, and will do much in assuring Timbol and the rest of the swine industry that their Christmas joy need not be limited to today's temporary high swine prices.

*(The author is chair of Agriwatch, a private sector initiative; former undersecretary of agriculture and trade and industry and former chair and Cabinet secretary for Presidential Flagship Programs and Projects. For inquiries or suggestions, e-mail agriwatchphil@yahoo.com or telefax 02-8516635.)*

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# CDC asked to return P500M worth of Mimosa assets

By Doris C. Dumlao

MONDRAGON International Phils. Inc. has demanded the return of over P500 million worth of assets which were allegedly confiscated from the Mimosa Leisure Estate by Clark Development Corp.

In a letter to the CDC, a copy of which was sent to the Philippine Stock Exchange, company chair and CEO Jose Antonio Gonzales said Mondragon was willing to cede its rights over Mimosa provided the confiscated sum would be returned to it and that its creditors would be paid.

Gonzales noted that when CDC took over the Mimosa estate in 1999, it did not have the authority to confiscate moveable assets. He said that some P470 million worth of assets were seized, even automobiles leased to Mondragon and owned by leasing companies.

"Likewise, we need you to return the P12 million taken by CDC from the casino vault and approximately P25 million from the Holiday Inn for business transacted before the writ of execution. We have receipts to this effect," Gonzales said.

For the last three months, Gonzales said Mondragon had been told that there was a Korean investor keen on the facility.

"However, if there really is an investor, what is the need to advertise for parties interested to manage Mimosa? If so, should this party not be introduced to us?" he said, referring to reports that CDC will bid out the management of Mimosa.

"Unless Mondragon is part of the equation, this shall be opposed by us vigorously. Instead of all these happening, our assets should be returned immediately," he stressed.

Gonzales said Mondragon was prepared to sit down and discuss how best to resolve the conflict with CDC.

He warned that Mondragon could resort to litigation if CDC would not hear its woes.

"It has been almost five years when, on Dec. 14, 1998 our casino was invaded and closed illegally by police Special Action Forces numbering over 100," Gonzales said.

"Since then, we have been practically without income and the fact that we continue to exist is an act of Providence. But our backs are against the wall and we must protect our shareholders," he said.

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Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

# Fallacies and facts on strategic marketing planning

By Karen V. de Asis
*Contributor*

MUCH has been written about the downside of hyper-competition. Little has been mentioned about its upside that has ushered a customer-driven mindset among manufacturers and service providers.

In the industrial and post-industrial era, products and services were offered based on what the manufacturers believe they could sell and not entirely on what customers needed. The formula for selling products and services was regimented—manufacturer chooses the product, pumps in millions of pesos in advertising, provides the salespeople and channels with incentives and voila—goods and services turn into cash.

This no longer holds true as manufacturers and service providers face stiff competition with consumers having a strong voice in shaping products and services offered to the market.

Today, the changes in the business environment and the emerging influence of consumers dictate a change in the way companies manage their business heading toward a stronger marketing-oriented philosophy that revolves around the customer. Even world-renowned management guru, Peter F. Drucker, concedes the marketer's fundamental role in business when he says, "there can be no company strategy that is not in some fundamental function a marketing strategy, where the sole business purpose is to create a satisfied customer." Related to this, marketing practitioner Steve Harrell, formerly of General Electric, in a speech delivered before the American Marketing Association's Educators' Meeting says, "The marketing manager is the most significant functional contributor to the strategic planning process, with leadership roles in defining the business mission; analysis of the environmental, competitive and business situations; developing objectives, goals and strategies; and defining product, market, distribution and quality plans to implement the business strategies."

## Functional marketing

The importance of functional marketing in strategic planning and success in business has become a foregone conclusion. Marketing guru Philip Kotler succinctly describes the art of market-oriented strategic planning as the "process that helps shape the company's business, products, services and communications so that they can achieve targeted profits and growth."

Unfortunately, not too many understand what market-oriented strategic planning is all about. Here are some fallacies and facts behind strategic planning in marketing:

Fallacy one. Budgets or numbers drive market-oriented strategic planning.

Fact one. Nothing is farther from the truth. There is nothing strategic in merely listing expense budgets and figures, especially when one does not understand where the numbers are coming from, except that it has been handed from the top or provided by the chief finance officer.

BUSINESS SUCCESS
FACTS
FALLACIES

## Rationalize markets

The more marketing-oriented firms rationalize their customer markets, study the opportunities and threats, recognize their core competencies and define their company and brands' directions. Sales volumes, while an objective, and expense budgets while requiring allocation, are the result of a careful study of the environment, market opportunities and company direction.

Fallacy two. Market oriented strategic planning is only for the big companies and not for SMEs (small-to medium-sized entrepreneurs).

Fact two. Wrong. Marketing-oriented strategic planning does not choose industries, categories, or size of businesses. As the saying goes, who has no plan begins lost. What varies may be the extent and complexity of the process and the output, which includes the business strategies indicated in the business and marketing plan.

Marketing-oriented strategic planning demands that the businessman, whether he is operating a small-scale *carinderia* or quick service restaurant or a large food manufacturing company for example, should understand the preferences of his customers, identify and determine the movement and products or services of his competitors, be aware of the changes in the macro-environment (e.g. political legislations like new taxes) that may affect his business, etc. Without fully comprehending the nature of his business and his customer, the same businessman is likened to a horse with blinders.

## Research is important

Fallacy three. Consumer market research is not material to marketing-oriented strategic planning sessions.

Fact three. Consumer market research is a most important tool for brand direction setting and therefore, is relevant to market-oriented strategic planning sessions. Consumer market research captures insights on how consumers behave toward a product or service category, perceptions toward different brands in the category, what consumers like or dislike about certain brands, etc. which information is likely to lead to a new marketing direction. Fact is—consumer research should not stop at being a documented evidence of what marketers may already know but should actually be used as a tool to dredge more consumer insights that can be the basis of a new campaign. Some businesses may have become successful despite a lack of consumer market research yet as these businesses grow their microenvironment changes and they are faced with fiercer competition. The only way to sustain their growth and even ride higher than their competitors is to remain knowledgeable about the consumer market, which can only be best served through sustained consumer market research.

Fallacy four: Market-oriented strategic planning is only for the marketing team.

Fact four: Market-oriented strategic planning is a team effort that encourages all functional departments to be part of the process. A marketing-oriented strategic planning session implicitly encourages all functional departments to pull toward a single, unified direction that prioritizes customer needs and wants while achieving business objectives. This creates a winning situation for both the organization's stakeholders and the company's customers. The more forward-thinking companies capitalize on this opportunity by mounting a forum for a strategic thinking process designed to encourage business-planning participants to think out of the box and explore other creative business strategies that may lead to brand success. An increasing number of organizations either open up their strategic planning meetings with an in-house strategic marketing seminar or schedule their strategic planning sessions following a strategic marketing training. Business planning meetings that are preceded by a strategic marketing seminar attended by marketers and non-marketers including finance, production and other key representatives from other functional departments set the stage for strategic thinking. This is a welcome relief to marketers as non-marketers are provided an avenue to understand what marketing is all about.

Fallacy five: A market-oriented strategic planning is just one of those conferences or meeting where everything is discussed but nothing materializes.

Fact five: The market-oriented strategic planning is a most important session for marketers. In this most important business meeting, the marketer's strategic wisdom to drive the brand and consequently, the company, to profitability is challenged. It is an opportune event for marketers who are brand and customer champions, to convince the entire management team to provide adequate support and resources to key brands and make them understand why the company's brand portfolio is as it is or as it should be. It is also in this occasion that a leader's mettle and the company's philosophy become well defined. Is the company driven by customer needs that require support for business activities that may compromise short-term earnings yet lead to long-term, sustained profitability and customer loyalty. Or is the company shaped by a short-term orientation that make stockholders grin the first year but unexpectedly grunt the succeeding years.

Today, strategic planning sessions take a grounded approach as more time is devoted to processing the company and its brand portfolio, understanding how developments in the environment can affect the organization and its brands, defining how brands can help actualize the vision mission statement, identifying the organization's key success factors and indicators not to mention, studying competitor movements. In the end, a viable fit is established between the changing market opportunities and the company's business objectives, strengths, skills and resources.

Clearly, to fully understand marketing is to know strategic planning. And this knowledge capital is what differentiates the true marketer from the pseudo-marketer.

*(The author is a marketing consultant and professor of Marketing Management and Brand Management at the De La Salle Professional School's Graduate School of Business with email address at kdeasis@skyinet.net )*

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# Christmas-New Year tax tips and reminders

By Luna Mae Fulache-Aguja
*SGV & Co*

**TAX-FILES**

TIMELESS Christmas songs play in the air, colorful twinkling kaleidoscopic lights brighten streets, and the cold chilly air at night remind us that Christmas is just around the corner. A great time to give and share, reunite and rekindle friendships and kinships. Christmas is definitely a felicitous and joyous season for most people but spells great responsibility for most financial guardians of businesses and enterprises.

The country's financial controllers and accountants are mostly confined in their offices at this time of year due to voluminous tax reporting requirements that must be kept in a row.

It is therefore timely and fitting to make a checklist/reminder for tax reports and requirements which need to be complied with before the year ends and during the first month of the following year to avoid unnecessary miss outs that automatically result to penalties.

What are the things that should be accomplished before the end of the year? What should be top of mind before the books are closed on Dec. 31, 2003? What are you expected to do at the beginning of the coming year?

For the accountant, planning ahead is the key.

Things I must do before the year ends:

**1. Annualize withholding tax on compensation**

Before December, all employers are expected to have annualized the compensation income of their employees for purposes of computing the annualized taxes withheld from compensation income. Annualized withholding tax method is usually made when the employer-employee relationship is terminated before the end of the calendar year and when computing for the yearend adjustment. To annualize:

Step 1. Determine the taxable regular and supplementary compensation paid to the employee for the entire calendar year.

Step 2. If the employee has previous employment/s within the year, add the amount of taxable regular and supplementary compensation paid to the employee by the previous employer.

Step 3. Deduct from the aggregate amount of compensation computed above, the amount of the total personal and additional exemptions of the employee.

Step 4. Deduct the amount of premium payments on health and/or hospitalization insurance of employees who have presented evidence that they have paid during the taxable year premium payments (the deductible amount shall not exceed P2,400 per year or P200 per month whichever is lower) and that their family's total gross income does not exceed P250,000 for the calendar year.

Step 5. Compute the amount of tax on the difference arrived at in Step 4 using the graduated tax rate provided in Section 24(A) of the Tax Code.

Step 6. Determine the deficiency or excess, if any, of the tax computed in Step 5 over the cumulative tax already deducted and withheld since the beginning of the current calendar year. If there is a deficiency tax, then the same shall be deducted from the last payment of compensation for the calendar year. If there is excess tax, then, the same should be refunded to the employee.

**2. Register manual books of accounts** Section 232 of the Tax Code requires all corporations, companies, partnerships or persons required by law to pay internal revenue taxes to keep a journal and a ledger or their equivalents; provided, however, that those whose quarterly sales, earnings, receipts or output do not exceed P50,000 shall keep and use simplified set of bookkeeping records.

The bookkeeping regulations of the BIR requires that books of accounts shall first be presented for approval and registration with the revenue district officer where his principal place of business is located before the same shall be used. Thus, there is a need to present manual books of accounts that shall be used for taxable calendar year 2004 for registration and approval on or before the last working day of December 2003.

Things to ponder before closing my books of accounts:

**1. Write-off of bad debts**

In case a taxpayer plans to charge off during the year debts deemed worthless and uncollectible and were incurred in connection with his trade, business or practice of profession, he must first ascertain with reasonable degree of certainty the uncollectibility of the debt.

Revenue Regulations No. 25-2002 provides that the commissioner of Internal Revenue will consider all pertinent evidence, including the value of the collateral, if any, securing the debt and the financial condition of the debtor in determining whether a debt is worthless.

Also, the assigning of the case for collection to an independent collection lawyer who is not under the employ of the taxpayer and who shall report on the legal obstacle and the virtual impossibility of collecting the same from the debtor and who shall issue a statement under oath showing the propriety of the deductions thereon made for alleged bad debts shall likewise be considered by the commissioner.

Thus, where the surrounding circumstances indicate that a debt is worthless and uncollectible and that legal action to enforce payment would in all probability not result in the satisfaction of execution on a judgment, a showing of those facts will be sufficient evidence of the worthlessness of the debt for the purpose of deduction.

The same regulations further states that in no case may a receivable from an insurance or surety company be written off from the taxpayer's books and claimed as bad debts deduction unless such company has been declared closed due to insolvency or for any such similar reason by the insurance commissioner.

In the absence of a certainty on the uncollectibility of the debt as demonstrated by the above situations, then you may need to reconsider writing off the debt from your books and claiming the same as a deductible expense for income tax purposes.

**2. Entertainment, amusement and recreation expenses**

A taxpayer would normally incur in the conduct of his trade, business or exercise of profession expenses in entertaining, providing amusement and recreation to, or meeting with a guest or guests at a dining place, place of amusement, country club, theater, concert, play, sporting event and similar events or places. These expenses are normally deductible as entertainment, amusement and recreation expenses provided these are incurred during the taxable year and directly connected to the development, management and operation of the trade, business or profession of the taxpayer or directly related to or in furtherance of the conduct of his trade, business or exercise of his profession. Moreover, said expense must be duly substantiated with adequate proof and appropriately subjected to withholding taxes, if applicable.

In addition to the above requisites, the BIR has already provided a ceiling or limit on such EAR expenses considered as deductible. Revenue Regulations No. 10-2002 provides that EAR expenses may be deducted from gross income provided it shall not exceed 50 percent of net sales for taxpayers engaged in sale of goods or properties; or one percent of net revenue for taxpayers engaged in sale of services, including exercise of profession and use or lease of properties. However, if the taxpayer is deriving income from both sale of goods/ properties and services, the allowable EAR expense shall in all cases be determined based on an apportionment formula taking into consideration the percentage of the net sales/net revenue to the total net sales/net revenue, but which in no case shall exceed the maximum percentage ceiling provided in the regulations.

Furthermore, the taxpayer is required to use in its financial statements and income tax return the account title entertainment, amusement and recreation expense, or in the alternative, to disclose in the notes to financial statement the amount corresponding to such expenses.

However, such expense should be reported in the taxpayer's income tax return as a separate expense item.

Thus, if your company is not yet using the prescribed account title on representation expenses, it is not yet too late to re-align your practice with the appropriate presentation.

**3. Net operating loss carry over (Nolco) and minimum corporate income tax (MCIT)**

If your company is still carrying in its books Nolco derived from taxable calendar year 1999, then the benefit of said Nolco is now forfeited and could no longer be used as deduction in the computation of your income tax for taxable year 2003. However, if your Nolco is derived from taxable calendar year 2000, then, you have up to the yearend of 2003 to avail of such deduction pursuant to Section 34 (D)(3) of the Tax Code.

It is therefore beneficial for the company to plan ahead of time so as to maximize the benefit of Nolco.

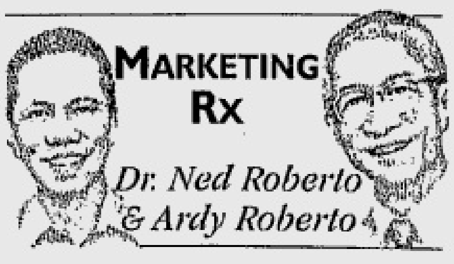
On the other hand, Revenue Regulations No. 9-98 provides for the guidelines on the imposition of MCIT. It provides that any excess of the MCIT over the normal income tax as computed under Section 27(A) of the Tax Code shall be carried forward on an annual basis and credited against the normal income tax for the three immediately succeeding taxable years.

Any excess MCIT shall be recorded in the corporation's books as an asset under account title deferred charges-minimum corporate income tax.

Thus, that if a company had excess MCIT in taxable calendar year 1999, the same ceases to be creditable in 2003.

Further, MCIT derived in taxable calendar year 2000 shall only be credited up to 2003. Any excess MCIT in 1999 must be removed and deducted from deferred charges-minimum corporate income tax account by a debit entry to a provision for income tax-deferred account and a credit entry to deferred charges-minimum corporate income tax account since the MCIT is not allowable as deduction from gross income.

# How effective is billboard advertising?



ONE of our marketing seminar students had this interesting question:

"We're in the food business; both processed packaged food sold in supermarkets as well as in the semi-fastfood restaurant chain. We're thinking of billboard advertising for both our processed packaged food products and our restaurant chain. But I've heard from others that billboard advertising works more for non-food businesses like those in clothing than those in the food category. Is this true? For what products does billboard advertising really work?"

We understand your apprehension. And you're not alone. All of a sudden it seems like everyone is into billboard advertising. The Guadalupe section of EDSA is about to literally be sky-less because there's a billboard anywhere you turn. Makes you wonder how many of the daily vehicular accidents there are traceable to those almost hypnotic billboards.

The trouble is that most of them are so catchy, beautiful and Kodak-quality in their reproduction that your eyes can't seem to move away from looking at them or more precisely, the "talents" they feature. It was digital reproduction technology that resurrected the billboard advertising industry from an impending end-state senility.

## Measuring effectiveness

Ok, so what about our student's question and concern?

The senior MRx's breakthrough research on billboard advertising effectiveness told us that the effectiveness of billboard ads has nothing to do with product category. It's not the effectiveness determinant. It's something else. So you should focus your attention to this true determinant of billboard effectiveness.

The senior MRx got into this effectiveness research because his own research industry colleagues said that billboard advertising effectiveness can't be measured. Alas, one look at some of those past research studies and MRx discovered that they tried measuring billboard effectiveness by treating billboard advertising like a TV commercial ad. In other words, the same effectiveness measures and measurement process were applied. This is the research design that the senior MRx changed and adjusted to suit the character of a billboard ad.

Of course, this is not the venue for giving the details of the more appropriate research design but just in case you're interested, you can buy the research from its sponsor who now owns that study. That's Publicis Manila, an advertising agency at the 4th floor of Zaragoza Building in Gamboa Street, Makati. (You can also try calling Jenny of LifeCycle Books at 813-2732/45 who'll try to help you get a copy.)

The research measured four effectiveness indicators of billboard ads. Those were:

(1) total billboard ad awareness,

(2) translation of the awareness into buying motivation, and

(3) conversion of the buying motivation into actual buying. The research defined the billboard ad's overall actual buying effectiveness ratio as equal to the product obtained by multiplying these three effectiveness ratios:

Overall actual buying ratio = (total awareness ratio)x (buying motivation to awareness ratio) x (actual buying to buying motivation ratio)

So this was the model of an effective consumer behavior response to a billboard ad. The billboard that works is one that is able to make its target consumers aware of it even in just an unaided manner, and then is able to convert that awareness into a buying motivation, and finally is able to move that motivation into actual buying.

## Giant Post-It notes?

All these consumer responses come by way of reminders. In other words, consumers are already aware of your advertised product or brand from your print, radio or TV ads. The billboard ad reminds you of that awareness. Just like a giant Post-It note. Then, it next reminds consumers about their previously felt buying motivation for the advertised product. Once the reminder reaches this second order level, the actual buying becomes more likely especially when the billboard is located near the place or outlet where the aware and motivated consumer can implement his or her buying motivation into actual buying. So the first conclusion of our research is that billboards are usually not a stand-alone ad media.

Next, our research data said that not all kinds of billboards will work in this reminder function. There are three basic billboard ad categories to distinguish:

(1) billboard ads that make no call to action,

(2) those that make a verbal call to action, and

(3) those that make a non-verbal call to action.

The call to action is of course a call to consumers to do something: "drink" in the case of the Nestea Plunge billboard; "pass by" in the case of the Jollibee billboard featuring Aga's invitaton, "daan muna tayo sa Jollibee;" "switch" in the case of the JCB Dream Card's billboard ad. These are all examples of a verbal call to action. A non-verbal call to action simply shows the ad talent actually doing or is about to do the action that the ad wants from the consumer.

## Non-verbal call to action

The analysis of the research data showed that the motivating and purchase triggering billboard ad is one that makes a call to action. A billboard ad that does not is least motivating and very weak in moving consumers to actual purchase.

Between a billboard ad that makes a verbal call to action and one that makes a non-verbal call to action, our data analysis points to a directional advantage of the ad with a non-verbal call to action over the one with a verbal call to action. On hindsight, this makes logical sense. Especially if you're driving, there's only a few seconds to process a billboard ad's message. (Unless, of course, you're stuck or crawling along south "suffer" highway!) A verbal call to action requires reading the written message. A non-verbal call to action is visual and processing is almost instantaneous.

## MRx for billboard advertisers

To summarize, here are the three principles of effective billboard advertising:

Billboards are not an effective mono-media communication tool. Being essentially a reminder tool, use billboards to support or reinforce your traditional media, that is, your TV, radio and/or print.

- Avoid billboard advertising that has no call to action. If you don't and you still go ahead with one, you'll get what you ask for: just awareness effectiveness and no consumer action impact.
- Get your ad agency to develop a billboard ad that makes a non-verbal call to,action. An ad that has a verbal call to action is just as effective when the verbal call to action is readable and understandable in 2-3 seconds.

Of course, if you're a marketing executive in Singapore, then you've just wasted your time reading this. MRx's in-law, Rene Navas, who works for IBM in Singapore says that the Lion City has banned billboards from cluttering their roads and highways.

Have a very merry Christmas!

*Feedback at MarketingRx@SaltandLightVentures.com*

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# How to get sure seats

MYAYALA.COM, a 50/50 joint venture between Ayala Land, Inc. and Azolea Technologies Inc., launched today the Sureseats Multi-Pass, the country's first online prepaid ticket reservation card.

The Multi-Pass, or M-Pass, allows moviegoers to reserve and pay for their tickets in advance through Sureseats.com, an online movie ticket reservation system pioneered by myAyala for Ayala Center theaters.

myAyala chief operating officer Teodoro K. Limcaoco said that M-Pass introduces moviegoers to the country's first "ticketless" movie experience. As Sureseats.com subscribers, movie-goers can check movie schedules at certain Ayala Center cinemas and make seat reservations.

With M-Pass, subscribers can pay for their tickets online using their credit card or prepaid cards purchased at Greenbelt 3 cinemas. The prepaid cards are worth P200 to as much as P2,000 and are valid up to three months from date of purchase. The credits can be used up to six months from the time these are loaded into the account. myAyala charges an additional fee of P10 per person for Sureseats service.

To experience the fully "ticketless" service, users only have to show up at the screening time and swipe their M-Pass card at a Cisco-powered terminal located at the cinema entrances. Cisco's wireless system immediately validates the screening schedule and the number of reserved seats. Moviegoers no longer have to queue for their tickets or pick up their Sureseats reservations 45 minutes before the screening time.

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# Fast-food chain gives birth to three entrepreneurs

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

ALING Amelia started with *atchara*.

ALING Nene's (right) mother was the favorite vegetable vendor of Robert Kuan.

AL Arcilla started selling at 8

IN MANY ways, fast food companies are only as good as their suppliers.

If the suppliers do not come with the freshest produce or meat, then they would not be able to live up to their claim of serving the best food at the most affordable prices.

Chowking knows this only too well, which is why it takes care of its many suppliers. Many of them have tracked the success of Chowking, growing from small entrepreneurs who had small stalls in wet markets into large-scale operators with their own homes and fleet of cars and delivery trucks.

## Halo-halo queen

One of these is Aling Amelia Valenzuela who sold *atchara* or pickled young papaya at the San Juan market for a number of years to help her husband provide food on the table for their growing family.

That was until 1972 when she noticed that the vendor beside her was doing a much better business selling bottled sweets used for making halo-halo.

So just like what other Filipinos would do, she shifted strategies and sold sweetened beans and macapuno in bottles as well. But she was not content to be a mere copycat.

In time, she became the master at the trade.

"I bought a bottle from her and started experimenting with the ingredients. I asked my mother-in-law and sisters-in-law for advice because they are in the food business, then I asked my neighbors to taste what I cooked," Aling Mely says in Filipino.

Mely recalls that she boiled the beans too long and burned the macapuno a number of times before she was finally able to cook the ingredients right.

"When I was ready, I started selling my bottled sweets along with the *atchara* in the San Juan market. The first day, I sold five bottles, the next day I sold 10 bottles. Before I knew it, I was already selling about 200 bottles to different markets such as Mandaluyong, Paco, Pasay and Arranque, and reached as far as Tarlac and Olongapo because of the demand for my product," Aling Mely says.

It was while she was selling her bottled sweets at the Arranque market in 1987 when one of the officers of Chowking came around and bought a bottle of her sweets.

"Apparently, the Chowking employees liked it because soon after that, they asked me if I could make a sample of the halo-halo ingredients for them because they were going to introduce halo-halo in the menu. Chowking had only about 17 branches at that time," she says.

Chowking initially bought five bottles of each ingredient, which went up to 10 after a week and in two months, Aling Mely was producing 30 bottles per ingredient. Aling Mely says the volume grew big enough that Robert Kuan, who used to own Chowking, asked her if she could be the exclusive supplier for the company.

"I could not believe my ears because I was just renting a small place then to produce what they ordered. When Mr. Kuan came to visit, he said that the place was too small so he asked me to look for another place," she says.

From a small place in Bago Bantay, Quezon City, Aling Mely moved to a 91-square-meter property in Manila to give her enough space to produce about 200 bottles of each ingredient every day. The factory was on the ground floor and the family lived on the top floor.

Then Jollibee Food Corp. bought Chowking in 2000 and the expansion plans were in full swing.

"The new Chowking president, Mr. Dela Rosa, came to visit and told me again that my place was too small but I had no more money at that time to move to another place, that was why I was so happy when Chowking helped me get the funds to move to a bigger 320-square-meter place to accommodate the bigger orders," she says.

Aling Mely currently produces about 500 packs per ingredient a day, which goes up to as many as 3,000 packs per ingredient during the peak season. She has also been asked to include leche flan on the list.

She says she still wonders how she was able to progress over the years from carrying her products in a basket and *bayong*, to today where she has a full-fledged factory with refrigerated vans.

"I owe it all to the quality of my product and the trust that Chowking had in me. They helped me from the start, so I really give them what they ask for and even more in terms of quality. I only sell them my best because we have built a relationship on trust," she says.

## Aling Nene's vegetables

Like Aling Mely, Emilia Balistoy forged a strong partnership with Chowking. Aling Nene found her fortune in vegetables. In fact, it was Aling Nene who introduced Aling Mely to Chowking, having provided the Kuans with vegetables since 1985.

Aling Nene and Aling Mely used to sell their wares side by side at the Arranque market and Aling Nene's mother vouched for Aling Mely's products because she loved the taste of her garbanzos.

"I have been selling vegetables since I was 16 because my mother had a vegetable stall in Arranque and one of her *sukis* was Robert Kuan's mother," she says.

Aling Nene recalls that Robert Kuan and his mother would buy the vegetables themselves and they used to go all around the other vegetable stalls in Arranque, but they always came back to her because she had the best vegetables.

"Then in 1985, I was asked to bring my vegetables to Makati because the Kuans where then starting Chowking. They used to buy just five kilograms of pechay, 3 to 5 kilograms of other vegetables and 1.4 kilogram of spring onions," she says.

Aling Nene says she used to buy her vegetables wholesale from Divisoria and then retails them at Arranque. But as Chowking grew, she was told to source her vegetables direct from Baguio to cut on costs and to meet the increased volume.

"We used to just rent a jeep from Divisoria to Arranque and then when my husband and I were able to earn enough, we bought our first stainless jeep in 1988. By 1993, we had our own truck to go to Baguio and get the vegetables for Chowking," Aling Nene says.

Her volume grew from just five kilograms to today's over 100 kilograms, thanks to the steady growth of Chowking.

"Now I have three vans because the volume continues to grow and because of the help they provided me. They also helped us suppliers know more about the business and I have remained loyal to them even if there are other companies that also want me to supply them with vegetables," she says.

Aling Nene attributes her success with Chowking to her eye on quality. She says she makes sure that the vegetables that she sells have no chemicals and are of the right size and sweetness. Her truck goes to Baguio every other day and gets the vegetables direct from the farmers to ensure their freshness.

She supplies Chowking with the pechay, cabbage, carrots, cauliflowers, sayote, sprint onions, baguio beans and celery.

"If we have rejects, we bring them to a missionary in Tayuman where they make pansit for the orphans," she says.

Aling Nene stresses that it pays to focus on quality and to putting value on a long-term business relationship.

"Others have tried to get us, offering us two to three times the price for our vegetables but I don't bite because I believe that I have already established a relationship with Chowking, which would not be guaranteed by this other company. It is not worth it," she says.

She adds that it is important to be honest in your work and not take advantage of people who help you along the way.

"I never thought that I would be where I am now, with my own house and in a position to help other people. I believe that God has been good to us because we have always been honest and put in a good day's work," she says.

## Bringing home the bacon

While other eight-year-old children were busy playing in the streets or sleeping to their heart's content, Alfonso Arcilla woke up at 2 in the morning to accompany his mother to the Divisoria wet market where they had a meat stall.

Arcilla learned the life of a matador (butcher) and combined selling with his studies until 2nd year high school when he gave up his studies to concentrate on his parents' business. Selling meat, he says, became a passion.

It was just as well because he went into it in a big way in 1994 when Arcilla, then 18, was introduced to one of the purchasing managers of Chowking and was given the contract to supply about 50 kilograms of meat for soup stock.

"I had no car at that time, I used to rent and I was my own assistant. I loaded and unloaded the meat by myself just to earn money," Arcilla says in Filipino.

He supplied Chowking for about two years before Chowking asked him to supply more because other suppliers were no longer willing to provide meat because of the low prices.

"They asked if I could bring in 200 kilograms of meat and I said I would find a way to do it although I was a little afraid because we had no money then. I was lucky because I was able to negotiate a good deal with my suppliers. That was how the big orders started," Arcilla says.

He admits that there were many times when he would just break even because the cost of meat was high and Chowking's purchase price was fixed. He, however, continued to supply the company because his mother always stressed that they should persevere even if the profit margin is small.

"She told me to develop a good business relationship even if the profit is small because at least the orders are steady. That was why I stayed with Chowking while other suppliers left. So since they left, my orders increased and meat prices eventually went down so I was able to make a good profit," he says.

From the first 50 kilograms of meat, Arcilla currently sells about 3,000 kilograms of meat a day to Chowking. Orders sometimes increase to 4,000 kilograms during the peak season.

In nine years, Arcilla was able to fix their house, bought a car for himself and another car for his mother as a gift for her birthday.

Arcilla has also proven his reliability as a supplier that he was asked to supply other items for Chowking such as *singkamas* (turnips) and ube.

"They asked me to supply the *singkamas* and ube because they had a shortage of supply, so I asked my mother to do it and we have been supplying them for about four years now. My mother goes to as far as Ilocos Norte and Davao to look for good supply," he says.

Arcilla attributes the business to their willingness to do business even if profit margins are small.

"Others are not willing to put in the time and the effort because they want to earn big immediately. That is not how we look at business. For us, it is more important to have a steady business relationship," he says.

## PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of December 18, 2003)

| STOCKS | OPEN | HIGH | LOW | CLOSE | VOLUME |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES** | | | | | |
| **BANKS** | | | | | |
| Banco de Oro Univ. Bank | 17.5 | 17.5 | 17.5 | 17.5 | 5,000 |
| Bank of the Phil. Islands | 46 | 46.5 | 46 | 46 | 503,500 |
| China Banking Corp. | 670 | 670 | 670 | 670 | 620 |
| Citystate Savings Bank | 15.25 | 15.25 | 15.25 | 15.25 | 1,800 |
| Equitable PCI Bank Inc. | 34 | 34 | 34 | 34 | 17,500 |
| Export and Ind. Bank Inc | 0.49 | 0.52 | 0.49 | 0.52 | 550,000 |
| Metropolitan Bank & Trust | 27 | 27 | 26.5 | 27 | 4,600 |
| Philippine National Bank | 24.5 | 24.75 | 24.5 | 24.75 | 11,800 |
| Security Bank Corp. | 15.75 | 15.75 | 15.5 | 15.5 | 51,900 |
| Union Bank of the Phil. | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 600 |
| **FINANCIAL SERVICES** | | | | | |
| ATR Kim Eng Fin. Corp. | 2.28 | 2.28 | 2.28 | 2.28 | 54,000 |
| First Abacus Financial | 0.32 | 0.32 | 0.32 | 0.32 | 1,000,000 |
| Manulife Financial Corp. | 1705 | 1705 | 1700 | 1700 | 330 |
| Sun Life Financial Inc | 1310 | 1310 | 1305 | 1305 | 250 |
| **COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL** | | | | | |
| **COMMUNICATION** | | | | | |
| ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp | 25.5 | 25.5 | 25.5 | 25.5 | 2,500 |
| Digital Telecom Phils Inc | 0.67 | 0.67 | 0.67 | 0.67 | 120,000 |
| Globe Telecom Inc. | 805 | 825 | 805 | 825 | 62,250 |
| ISM Communications Corp. | 0.04 | 0.04 | 0.04 | 0.04 | 1,000,000 |
| Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp | 2.65 | 2.65 | 2.65 | 2.65 | 37,000 |
| Pilipino Tel. Corp. | 0.89 | 0.89 | 0.88 | 0.88 | 4,100,000 |
| Phil. Long Dis Tel Co. | 885 | 910 | 885 | 910 | 192,600 |
| Philweb Corp. | 0.011 | 0.011 | 0.011 | 0.011 | 7,000,000 |
| **POWER & ENERGY** | | | | | |
| Manila Electric Co. A | 14.5 | 14.75 | 14.5 | 14.5 | 66,400 |
| Manila Electric Co. B | 24 | 24 | 24 | 24 | 4,360,100 |
| Petron Corp. | 2.2 | 2.2 | 2.2 | 2.2 | 4,085,000 |
| **TRANSPORTATION SERVICES** | | | | | |
| Asian Terminals, Inc. | 1.32 | 1.32 | 1.32 | 1.32 | 200,000 |
| Int'l Container Term'l Sv | 3.3 | 3.3 | 3.3 | 3.3 | 208,000 |
| **CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS** | | | | | |
| Engineering Equip. Inc. | 0.36 | 0.36 | 0.36 | 0.36 | 130,000 |
| Union Cement Corp. | 1.04 | 1.06 | 1.04 | 1.04 | 324,000 |
| **FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO** | | | | | |
| Alaska Milk Corp. | 3.2 | 3.2 | 3.2 | 3.2 | 170,000 |
| Ginebra San Miguel Inc. | 31 | 31 | 31 | 31 | 2,000 |
| Jollibee Foods Corp. | 17 | 17.25 | 17 | 17.25 | 158,200 |
| Pancake House Inc. | 1.54 | 1.54 | 1.54 | 1.54 | 6,319,000 |
| RFM Corp. | 0.68 | 0.68 | 0.68 | 0.68 | 10,000 |
| Swift Food Inc. | 0.22 | 0.22 | 0.22 | 0.22 | 100,000 |
| San Miguel Corp. A | 54.5 | 54.5 | 54 | 54 | 84,600 |
| San Miguel Corp. B | 63 | 63 | 62.5 | 63 | 7,000 |
| Universal Robina Corp. | 5.4 | 5.4 | 5.4 | 5.4 | 1,000 |
| Vitarich Corp. | 0.26 | 0.26 | 0.26 | 0.26 | 380,000 |
| **HOLDING FIRMS** | | | | | |
| Ayala Corp. | 5.1 | 5.2 | 5.1 | 5.2 | 9,321,000 |
| Aboitiz Equity Ventures | 3.1 | 3.15 | 3.1 | 3.15 | 13,000 |
| A. Soriano Corp. | 0.8 | 0.86 | 0.8 | 0.86 | 50,000 |
| ATN Holdings Inc. | 1.7 | 1.7 | 1.7 | 1.7 | 10,000 |
| Boulevard Holdings Inc. | 0.08 | 0.08 | 0.08 | 0.08 | 200,000 |
| Benpres Holdings Corp. | 0.47 | 0.47 | 0.46 | 0.47 | 5,480,000 |
| Crown Equities Inc. | 0.185 | 0.185 | 0.18 | 0.18 | 430,000 |
| Southeast Asian Cement | 0.045 | 0.045 | 0.045 | 0.045 | 800,000 |
| DMCI Holdings Inc. | 0.27 | 0.27 | 0.27 | 0.27 | 130,000 |
| First Phil Hldgs Corp | 18.5 | 18.5 | 18.25 | 18.5 | 491,600 |
| Global Equities Inc. | 0.06 | 0.06 | 0.06 | 0.06 | 500,000 |
| Ionics Inc. | 1.44 | 1.44 | 1.44 | 1.44 | 1,000 |
| J.G. Summit Holdings Inc. | 1.98 | 1.98 | 1.98 | 1.98 | 6,000 |
| Marsteel Cons. Inc. B | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 1,000,000 |
| Metro Pacific Corp. | 0.27 | 0.27 | 0.27 | 0.27 | 1,100,000 |
| Music Corp. | 0.35 | 0.35 | 0.35 | 0.35 | 600,000 |
| **MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING** | | | | | |
| Euro-Med Lab. Phil. Inc. | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2,000 |
| Philippine Seven Corp. | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 18,839,000 |
| SPI Technologies Inc. | 11.5 | 11.5 | 11.5 | 11.5 | 100 |
| **HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES** | | | | | |
| Belle Corp. | 0.56 | 0.58 | 0.55 | 0.58 | 760,000 |
| Leisure & Resorts Corp. | 0.33 | 0.33 | 0.33 | 0.33 | 10,000 |
| **BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS** | | | | | |
| ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp (Pdr) | 25.5 | 25.5 | 25.5 | 25.5 | 731,100 |
| PLDT (10% Pref) Series N | 10.25 | 10.25 | 10.25 | 10.25 | 500 |
| PLDT (10% Pref) Series Q | 10.5 | 10.5 | 10.5 | 10.5 | 100 |
| PLDT (10% Pref) Series R | 11 | 11 | 11 | 11 | 1,300 |
| PLDT (10% Pref) Series W | 10.5 | 10.5 | 10.5 | 10.5 | 1,500 |
| PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y | 11.25 | 11.25 | 11.25 | -11.25 | 300 |
| Philweb Corp. - Warrants | 0.0006 | 0.0008 | 0.0006 | 0.0006 | 22,000,000 |
| **PROPERTY** | | | | | |
| Ayala Land Inc. | 5.9 | 6 | 5.9 | 6 | 5,608,000 |
| Cebu Holdings Inc. | 0.35 | 0.35 | 0.34 | 0.34 | 110,000 |
| C&P Homes Inc. | 0.16 | 0.16 | 0.16 | 0.16 | 150,000 |
| Cyber Bay Corp. | 0.145 | 0.145 | 0.135 | 0.135 | 450,000 |
| Filinvest Land Inc. | 1.04 | 1.04 | 1.04 | 1.04 | 1,037,000 |
| Highlands Prime, Inc. | 2.18 | 2.18 | 2.18 | 2.18 | 50,000 |
| Keppel Phils. Prop. Inc. | 0.8 | 0.8 | 0.8 | 0.8 | 30,000 |
| Kuok Phil. Properties | 0.16 | 0.16 | 0.16 | 0.16 | 360,000 |
| SM Prime Holdings Inc. | 6.4 | 6.5 | 6.4 | 6.5 | 9,764,000 |
| **MINING** | | | | | |
| Apex Mining Co., Inc. A | 0.15 | 0.15 | 0.15 | 0.15 | 20,000 |
| Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't | 0.98 | 0.98 | 0.98 | 0.98 | 100,000 |
| Benguet Corp. B | 1.7 | 2.5 | 1.7 | 2.5 | 19,000 |
| Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A | 0.23 | 0.23 | 0.225 | 0.225 | 2,340,000 |
| Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 400,000 |
| Manila Mining Corp. A | 0.008 | 0.008 | 0.0075 | 0.0075 | 8,000,000 |
| Manila Mining Corp. B | 0.0085 | 0.0085 | 0.0085 | 0.0085 | 5,000,000 |
| Philex Mining Corp. B | 0.4 | 0.41 | 0.39 | 0.41 | 1,020,000 |
| **OIL** | | | | | |
| Oriental Pet. & Min. A | 0.003 | 0.003 | 0.003 | 0.003 | 48,000,000 |
| Oriental Pet. & Min. B | 0.003 | 0.003 | 0.003 | 0.003 | 32,000,000 |
| The Philodrill Corp. A | 0.16 | 0.16 | 0.16 | 0.16 | 10,000 |

# IMF raises RP growth . . .

From page B1

that more private investment was necessary to ensure that there would be "adequate generation capacity over the medium term."

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura, the country's chief negotiator with the IMF, yesterday said that the Philippines still needed the third-party monitoring program with the Fund.

"We will extend it for one year. It it not a bad idea while we try to complete our reform program," he said the central bank chief.

The no-loan monitoring set-up that begun in 2001 was to end this year after the country had brought down its outstanding obligations with the IMF to less than 100 percent of its quota in November.

But an extension seemed necessary because of the prevailing volatile political situation. The IMF's seal of good housekeeping is deemed beneficial for countries like the Philippines where political risks have been weighing down the economy.

National Treasurer Sergio Edeza, who is in constant touch with foreign investors and creditors, said the IMF monitoring program would help build confidence.

"It gives investors and creditors extra confidence that if the country is under a PPM, then we are working under certain parameters that won't go overboard," he added. *With a report from AFP*

## DISCLOSURES

ELECTED directors of **BHI Holdings Inc.** were Manuel Tankiansee, Juanita Tan, Romulo Sigua, Jemie Tan, Miguel Ocampo-Tan, Emma Keng Ocampo-Tan, Rudin Gonzales, Marilou Pua, Brigido Dulay Jr., Nemesio Ang and Remedios Balingit.

* * *

**RIZAL Commercial Banking Corp.** disclosed the resignations of Jaime Panganiban as executive vice president and treasurer and Jorge Payawal as executive vice president and chief risk officer. Director Susanne Santos was designated as concurrent acting treasurer. Also designated were Narciso Erana as officer-in-charge for treasury department and Joseph Monzon as OIC of corporate risk management.

* * *

**SECURITY Bank Corp.** disclosed that Alberto Villarosa, senior executive vice president and chief operating officer, bought 10,000 shares of the bank at P15.75 per share.

* * *

ELECTED directors of **San Miguel Properties Inc.** were Ramon Ang, Jeronimo Kilayko, Ferdinand Constantino, Elmer Santos, Chonabeth Nazario, Hector Hofilena and Carmelo Santiago.

* * *

**BANK of the Philippine Islands** will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on March 25 at 9 a.m.

* * *

ELECTED directors of **Music Corp.** were Jimmy Soo, Michael Burton, Andrew Alcid, Patrick Go, Marie Therese Santos, Juan Custodio and Jose Alexander Ignacio. The company will change its name to **Music Semiconductors Corp.** and amend its primary purpose from that of a holding company to a semiconductor manufacturing company. ***Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research***

# ALI sees higher profit this year

By Elena R. Torrijos

LOCAL property giant Ayala Land Inc. expects to end the year with better profit than last year's P2.52 billion.

"It should be better than the previous year," outgoing ALI president Francisco Licuanan III told reporters in a briefing yesterday. "Growth will come from the middle income, both from commercial and mass-housing."

Licuanan said ALI's entry into the middle income market was a "major strategic move" and the area should be a "major area of growth."

Late last year, the property firm launched The Columns, an affordable three-tower residential high-rise project at the edge of the Makati Central Business District. It also began the construction of Market! Market!, a retail center targeting the low to middle-income market.

He disclosed that the firm next year would develop a middle-income residential subdivision project south of Metro Manila and probably launch a sequel to The Columns and, additionally, a similar high-end project in Fort Bonifacio.

ALI has already sold 95 percent of the units of the first tower of The Columns, 80 percent of the second tower and has recently launched the third tower, Licuanan, who will be replaced by former general manager for international consultancy giant McKinsey in the Philippines Jaime Ayala next year, said.

He estimated that capital expenditures next year would be far lower than this year's level.

On the property firm's financing plans, Licuanan said: "At parent company level we would like to tap the capital markets more to allow our units to obtain financing from banks."

## CURRENCIES

| December 18, 2003<br>Country | Unit | Euro Equivalent | Dollar Equivalent | Peso Equivalent |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| United States | Dollar | 0.805542 | 1.000000 | 55.488000 |
| Japan | Yen | 0.007497 | 0.009307 | 0.516400 |
| United Kingdom | Pound | 1.423312 | 1.766900 | 98.041700 |
| Hongkong | Dollar | 0.103771 | 0.128821 | 7.148000 |
| Switzerland | Franc | 0.642891 | 0.798085 | 44.284100 |
| Canada | Dollar | 0.608002 | 0.754774 | 41.880900 |
| Singapore | Dollar | 0.471767 | 0.585652 | 32.496700 |
| Australia | Dollar | 0.592877 | 0.735998 | 40.839100 |
| Bahrain | Dinar* | 2.136773 | 2.652590 | 147.186900 |
| Saudi Arabia | Rial | 0.214806 | 0.266660 | 14.796400 |
| Brunei | Dollar | 0.470390 | 0.583942 | 32.401800 |
| Indonesia | Rupiah | 0.000095 | 0.000118 | 0.006500 |
| Thailand | Baht | 0.020317 | 0.025221 | 1.399500 |
| UAE | Dirham | 0.219332 | 0.272279 | 15.108200 |
| Euro | Euro | 1.000000 | 1.241400 | 68.882800 |
| Argentina | Peso | 0.272143 | 0.337838 | 18.746000 |
| Brazil | Real | 0.274929 | 0.341297 | 18.937900 |
| Denmark | Kroner | 0.134393 | 0.166836 | 9.257400 |
| India | Rupee | 0.017704 | 0.021978 | 1.219500 |
| Malaysia | Ringgit | 0.212013 | 0.263193 | 14.604100 |
| Mexico | New Peso | 0.071623 | 0.088913 | 4.933600 |
| New Zealand | Dollar | 0.519169 | 0.644496 | 35.761800 |
| Norway | Kroner | 0.120268 | 0.149301 | 8.284400 |
| Pakistan | Rupee | 0.014020 | 0.017405 | 0.965800 |
| South Africa | Rand | 0.123880 | 0.153785 | 8.533200 |
| Korea | Won | 0.000678 | 0.000842 | 0.046700 |
| Sweden | Kroner | 0.110680 | 0.137398 | 7.623900 |
| Syria | Pound | 0.018204 | 0.022599 | 1.254000 |
| Taiwan | Nt Dollar | 0.023741 | 0.029472 | 1.635300 |
| Venezuela | Bolivar | 0.000505 | 0.000627 | 0.034800 |

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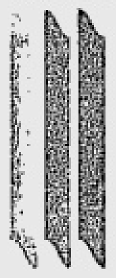

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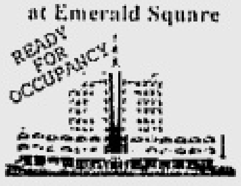

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## INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation (PDIC) invites interested bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for Manpower Services, Preventive and Remedial Maintenance Service for IT Equipment, and re-bidding for the Open Steel Shelves.

| PARTICULARS | QTY./ CONTRACT DURATION | APPROVED BUDGET |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Manpower Services for PDIC Chino Roces & Ayala Extension Offices<br>Minimum Experience Requirement:<br>At least 3 years experience in providing manpower services to government agency/ies or institution/s; and bank/s or financial institution/s and employing at least 200 contractual personnel. | 85 contractual personnel Six (6) months with possible extension for another six months (February 1, 2004 to July 31, 2004/ January 31, 2005) | Six (6) months: P6.75 million<br>One (1) year : P13.5 million |
| 2. Preventive and Remedial Maintenance Service for IT Equipment | January-December 2004 | P500,000.00 |
| 3. Open Steel Shelves | 106 units | P742,000.00 |
| Source of Funding | 2003 and 2004 Corporate Operating Budget | |
| Pre-bid Conference | January 8, 2004, 9:30 AM at the 9th Flr., PDIC Extension Office, SSS Bldg., Ayala Avenue cor. V.A. Rufino St., Makati City | |

The Instructions to Bidders and the Terms of Reference shall be made available to interested bidders starting December 19, 2003, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM at the BAC Secretariat, 9th Floor, PDIC Extension Office, SSS Building, Ayala Avenue cor. V.A. Rufino St., Makati City after payment of a non-refundable amount of P300.00 for each item to be bid.

Deadline for the submission of Eligibility Requirements and Proposals shall be on January 23, 2004, 1:00 PM at the Bidding Room, 9th Floor, PDIC Extension Office, SSS Bldg., Ayala Ave. cor. V.A. Rufino St., Makati City. Opening of eligibility requirements and bids shall follow immediately.

Criteria for eligibility check, examination and evaluation of bids and post-qualification shall be on non-discretionary pass/fail basis.

The eligibility screening of bidders, evaluation of bids and awarding of contract shall be governed by Republic Act 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

PDIC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or any part thereof, to waive any informality or minor defect, and to accept the offer most advantageous to the Government.

PDIC shall in no case be held responsible or liable for any and all costs associated with the bidder's participation in the bidding process regardless of its results.

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(PDI–Dec. 19 & 26, 2003)

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## PUBLIC NOTICES

### AUCTION SALE

MEYCAUAYAN-FILIPINAS Pawnshop, Aliw Complex, Calvario, Meyc. Bulacan. All unredeemed pledges of June 2003 will be auctioned on Dec. 22, 8:30 am. Lanuza & Sons-Auctioneer. (PDI-December 19, 2003)

NATION PAWNSHOP, INC., Pob. Meyc. Bulacan will auction unredeemed pledges of June '03 on Dec. 22, '03 10am. Lanuza & Sons (PDI-December 19, 2003)

### NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is given that the S2 Lic. 8441469 under the name of Dra. Fides Stella Salvacion M. Radang was Lost (PDI-Dec 19/03)

Notice is hereby given that the DANGEROUS DRUG ID S2#20501N01 OF Maria Cristina Gorospe,MD was lost. (PDI- December 05, 12 & 19, 2003)

## INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
REGIONAL TRIAL COURT
NATIONAL CAPITAL JUDICIAL REGION
BRANCH 5, MANILA

WILKIE M. YU,
Petitioner,
- versus -
Civil Case No. 03-108619
For: Declaration of Nullity of Marriage
SYLVIA Y. TABLADA,
Respondent.
x-----------------------------------------------x

**SUMMONS**

WHEREAS, on November 6, 2003, the Honorable AMALIA R. ANDRADE, Presiding Judge of this Court, issued an order in the above-entitled case, which reads as follows:

"Accordingly, and pursuant to Section 14, Rule 14 of the 1997 Rules of Civil Procedure, let summons be served upon the respondent, SYLVIA Y. TABLADA, at her last known address and by publication twice in a newspaper of general circulation to be selected through a raffle pursuant to P.D. 1079."

NOW, THEREFORE, pursuant to Sec. 14, Rule 14 of the 1997 Rules of Civil Procedure, respondent SYLVIA Y. TABLADA is hereby summoned and required to file with the Regional Trial Court of Manila, Branch 5 her Answer to the Petition for Annulment of Marriage filed against her by WILKIE M. YU within 30-days from the date of the last publication of this Summons, serving copy thereof upon the petitioner, C/O Atty. Rodrigo Y. Acardia, Rm. 900 9th Flr., National Life Insurance Bldg., Ayala Avenue, Makati City.

Upon failure on his part to do so as aforesaid, the herein petition shall be referred to the City Prosecutor of Manila for an investigation, to determine whether or not collusion exists between the parties, and to intervene for the State to see to it that the evidence submitted are not fabricated.

Let this Summons together with a copy of the petition be published twice at the expense of the Petitioner in PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER a newspaper of general circulation. Likewise, petitioner shall at his expense deposit a copy of this Summons as well as the petition, in the Central Post Office, postage pre-paid and by registered mail addressed to respondent SYLVIA Y. TABLADA at No. 1446 Kundiman Street, Sampaloc, Manila

Manila, November 19, 2003.

JENNIFER DELA CRUZ-BUENDIA
Clerk of Court
BY:
(Sgd.) IRENE R. BIEN
Officer-In-Charge

(PDI – Dec. 12 & 19, 2003)

---

# ACT Presents "Big" The Musical

FOR their 72nd production, Dennis Araullo, the youthful director of the Ateneo Children's Theater (ACT), the country's oldest children's theater, and his group are leaving nothing to chance. They are marshalling old feelings of enthusiasm and zeal, fortifying them with trust in the Almighty, once again. Scheduled by them by them at their Henry Lee Irwin Theatre is the premiere production of Big, the musical, in the country. It is a play which was presented in Broadway in 1996-1998. "It is based on the movie sensation, Big, written by Gary Ross and Anne Spielberg which starred Tom Hanks and catapulted him to the A-list of stars in Hollywood," enthuses Araullo.

Unlike Peter Pan which ACT premiered in the 1960's along with such well-loved musicals as Oliver and Aladdin, Big does not bring into full focus the world without woe of children. Nor does it convey the youngsters' wish not to grow up. But it tells the story of a 12-year-old named Josh Baskin who wants very much to be a grown-up.

In the opening scene of the play, Mrs. Baskin, Josh's mother, sighs as her son reappears in his bedroom filled with the clutter accumulated by an adolescent living in the limbo land which separates childhood from adulthood. Writers and psychologists consider this stage, early adolescence (11-13 years), as the most difficult part of the development of a person from birth to maturity. The early teener has been described as one who all of a sudden is overwhelmed by the changes taking place in his body, his mind, his feelings and his environment all at once. Standing alone while the floodgates of the emotions are flung open before him, he finds himself between two poles, the pole of childhood and the pole of adulthood, which alternately attract and repel him. At no time do his parents understand what it means to be an adolescent, to be in No Man's Land.

But the significant adults in his family feel they are in a bind. They are perplexed, and saddened to see him changing as Josh's mother expresses in her song: "I used to have a sweet little kid and now there's an alien in his room. We were so close but now – all that he talks to are his friends.

Like many other mothers, she probably fails to realize that the teenager has to take a breathing spell when he is smothered by excessive attention, affection and pampering.

This would prompt psychologists and psychiatrists to say "the ideal parent-child relationship is a partnership in development. It is not the child alone that develops through stages. The parents would do well to develop through the same stages hand-in-hand with the child. When the child becomes an adolescent the parents should not remain in the phase of the grade schooler but should step into the next phase accompanying the teenager, meeting his new needs, understanding and accepting him as he is.

Big's music composed by David Shire and lyrics by Richard Maltby is not only singable but also touching.

One of the highlights of the play is the choreography. Tap dancing which is seldom, if ever, preformed on the local stage, is a sure crowd-pleaser, especially when it is done on top of a giant piano.

It is sponsored by Accel Sportswear, Smart, Junior Inquirer, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Coca-Cola and Sceneasia Inc.

22ND CEBU POPULAR MUSIC Festival
16 JANUARY 2004
CEBU ARTS FOUNDATION, INC

**APPOINTMENT**

**Dancerg Marketing and Promotions Services was appointed as the marketing arm of the Cebu Arts Foundation, Inc. to handle the marketing planning and promotion selling of the 22nd Cebu Pop Music Festival for 2004 which will be on January 16, 2004. Shown in photo are the general manager of Dancerg, Cergen D. Go and Luciano Lim, chairman marketing and promotions Committee of Cebu Arts Foundation, Inc.**

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Republic of the Philippines
PHILIPPINE HEALTH INSURANCE CORPORATION
CityState Centre, 709 Shaw Boulevard, Pasig City
Healthline 637-9999 www.philhealth.gov.ph

12 November 2003

PHILHEALTH CIRCULAR
No. _37_, s-2003

TO : ALL MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM (NHIP), ACCREDITED HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS AND ALL OTHERS CONCERNED

SUBJECT : Reiteration of PHILHEALTH CIRCULAR NOs. 003, s2000, 002, s-2001 and 026, s-2001 and Procedures for Encashment of Benefit Payment Checks with Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP)

To properly identify claimants and avert problems in the claiming of Benefit Payment, PhilHealth Circular Nos. 003, s-2000, 002, s-2001 and 026, s-2001 are hereby reiterated:

1. For members who are permanently disabled/handicapped by age or sickness; and accredited doctors who have appointed a permanent Liaison Officer or even their secretaries to represent them:
   - a. Special Power of Attorney – one time for a specific and exclusive purpose
   - b. 2 valid IDs of members/accredited doctor
   - c. 2 valid IDs of representative
2. For members who cannot come because they're busy with their office work; and accredited doctors who are very busy specially those with ongoing operation:
   - a. Authorization Letter
   - b. 2 valid IDs of members/accredited doctor
   - c. 2 valid IDs of representative

The following are considered valid IDs in claiming Benefit Payment Checks:

- Company/Employer's ID
- New SSS ID
- PRC ID
- Driver's License
- PhilHealth Accredited Professional ID
- New BIR TIN ID
- Postal ID
- Passport issued by the Department Foreign Affairs
- Private Security License issued by
- Senior Citizen's IDPhil. National Police (PNP) to security personnal

To facilitate encashment of PhilHealth checks with Land Bank of the Philippines, the following procedures and requirements shall be caused:

1. Sign at the back of the check
2. Print your name under your signature
3. Print your present home address
4. Indicate the kind and number of IDs presented
5. Present to LBP attending teller three (3) valid IDs under any of the following circumstances

a) 1 Primary and 2 Secondary IDs
b) 2 Primary and 1 Secondary IDs
c) 3 Primary IDs

The Bank considers the following IDs:

| Primary | Secondary |
|---|---|
| 1. Company ID | 1 Postal ID |
| 2. School ID | 2. TIN Card |
| 3. Driver's License | 3. GSIS ID |
| 4. Passport | 4 SSS Card (New) |
| 5. Senior Citizen's ID | 5 Marriage Contract |
| 6. PRC ID | 6. ATM Cards |
| 7. Credit Cards | |
| 8. PAG-IBIG/PhilHealth ID | |
| 9. Voter's ID | |

Please be guided accordingly.

(Sgd.)FRANCISCO T. DUQUE, III, MD, M.Sc.
President and CEO

(PDI--Dec. 19, 2003)

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Republic of the Philippines
**Social Security Commission**
Makati City

AMPARO CHUA, JESUSA CHUA,
SALVADOR CHUA, HILARIO CHUA,
ARMINA CHUA and FROILAN CHUA,
Petitioners,
-versus- SSC CASE NO. 10-15076-2000
SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM
and UY SIM,
Respondents,
x-----------------------------------------------x

## NOTICE OF RESOLUTION/ORDER

TO : MR. UY SIM

**GREETINGS:**

Notice is hereby given that on the 3rd day of December 2003, a **RESOLUTION**, consisting of 5 pages, was promulgated in the above-mentioned case, the dispositive portion of which reads as follows:

> "Accordingly, the SSS is directed to pay the accrued SS death benefit to petitioners Jesusa, Salvador, Hilario, Armina and Froilan, all surnamed Chua, in their capacities as the legal heirs of deceased member, Ty Lian Hoo, a.k.a as Lim He Lai, in accordance with its existing rules and regulations, and to inform the Commission of its compliance herewith.
>
> SO ORDERED."

SOCIAL SECURITY COMMISSION

(PDI - Dec 19 2003)

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Republic of the Philippines
**Department of Education**
DIVISION OF ZAMBOANGA SIBUGAY
Ipil, Zamboanga Sibugay
Third Elementary Education Project
Bids and Awards Committee

## Invitation for Bids (IFB)

December 18, 2003

**To All Qualified Bidders:**

1. The Government of the Republic of the Philippines has received a loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) towards the cost of financing the Third Elementary Education Project (TEEP) and intends to apply part of the funds to cover eligible payments for civil works component of the project. Bidding is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the *Guidelines: Procurement under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits.*
2. The Division Bids and Awards Committee (DBAC) invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the following projects and locations to wit:

| PACKAGE NO. | PROJECT LOCATION | SCHOOL | TYPE OF WORK NC | RR | PCAB License Particular | BID OPENING |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ZSNCB-2003-04-072 A | ALICIA Zamboanga Sibugay | Alicia CES<br>Alegria ES<br>Naga-naga ES<br>Pandan-pandan ES | 1 | 6 | Small "B" for Building | January 21, 2004; 9:00 am |
| ZSNCB-2003-01-69-A | IPIL Zamboanga Sibugay | Lumbia ES<br>Magdaup ES | 2 | 3 | Small "B" for Building | January 21, 2004; 9:00 am |
| ZSNCB-2003-04-072-B | PAYAO Zamboanga Sibugay | Bulacan ES<br>Calapa ES<br>Nanan ES | 1 | 6 | Small "B" for Building | January 21, 2004; 9:00 am |
| ZSNCB-2003-01-069-B | TITAY Zamboanga Sibugay | Pulidan ES<br>Titay CES<br>Tugop ES | 1 | 7 | Small "B" for Building | January 20, 2004; 9:00 am |
| ZSNCB-2003-01-069-C | TUNGAWAN Zamboanga Sibugay | Tungawan CES<br>Gaycon ES<br>Lo. Tungawan ES | 1 | 6 | Small "B" for Building | January 20, 2004; 9.00 am |
| ZSNCB-2003-06-074 | ALICIA Zamboanga Sibugay | Alicia CES<br>Milagrosa ES<br>Naga-Naga ES<br>Talaptap ES | 1 | 7 | Small "B" for Building | January 21, 2004; 10.00 am |
| ZSNCB-2003-07-075 | BUUG Zamboanga Sibugay | Basalem ES<br>Guitom ES<br>Talamimi ES<br>Villacastor ES | 2 | 5 | Small "B" for Building | January 21, 2004; 9:00 am |
| ZSNCB-2003-08-076 | DIPLAHAN Zamboanga Sibugay | Ditay ES<br>Lindang ES | 2 | 3 | Small "B" for Building | January 21, 2004; 9:00 am |
| ZSNCB-2003-010-078 | IMELDA Zamboanga Sibugay | Little Baguio ES<br>Lumbog ES<br>Sta. Barbara ES | | 9 | Small "B" for Building | January 20, 2004; 9:00 am |
| ZSNCB-2003-011-079 | IPIL Zamboanga Sibugay | Bakalan ES<br>J. Repadas ES<br>Ipil CES<br>Tiayon ES<br>Veterans Village ES | 1 | 9 | Small "B" for Building | January 20, 2004; 9:00 am |
| ZSNCB-2003-012-080 | KABASALAN Zamboanga Sibugay | Kabasalan CES<br>Nazareth ES<br>Palinta ES<br>Sanghanan ES | 2 | 5 | Small "B" for Building | January 20, 2004, 9:00 am |
| ZSNCB-2003-013-081 | MABUHAY Zamboanga Sibugay | Mabuhay CES<br>Punawan ES<br>Sioion ES | | 9 | Small "B" for Building | January 21, 2004; 9:00 am |
| ZSNCB-2003-014-082 | MABUHAY Zamboanga Sibugay | Pamansaan ES<br>Tandu Comot ES | 2 | | Small "B" for Building | January 21, 2004; 9:00 am |
| ZSNCB-2003-015-083 | MALANGAS Zamboanga Sibugay | Malangas CES<br>Overland ES | 1 | 6 | Small "B" for Building | January 21, 2004, 9:00 am |
| ZSNCB-2003-016-084 | NAGA Zamboanga Sibugay | Naga CES<br>Sandayong ES | 2 | 4 | Small "B" for Building | January 20, 2004; 9:00 am |
| ZSNCB-2003-017-085 | OLUTANGA Zamboanga Sibugay | Fama ES<br>Olutanga CES<br>San Isidro ES<br>Villacorte ES | 1 | 9 | Small "B" for Building | January 21, 2004; 9:00 am |
| ZSNCB-2003-018-086 | PAYAO Zamboanga Sibugay | Binangonan ES<br>Culasian ES<br>La Fortuna ES<br>Balian ES | 1 | 6 | Small "B" for Building | January 21, 2004; 9:00 am |
| ZSNCB-2003-019-087 | RT LIM Zamboanga Sibugay | Casacon ES<br>Malubal ES<br>Palmera ES | 1 | 8 | Small "B" for Building | January 20, 2004; 9:00 am |
| ZSNCB-2003-020-088 | RT LIM Zamboanga Sibugay | Butakan ES<br>Surabay ES<br>Taruk ES | 1 | 5 | Small "B" for Building | January 20, 2004, 9:00 am |
| ZSNCB-2003-021-089 | SIAY Zamboanga Sibugay | Miranda ES<br>Siay CES<br>Dacanay ES | 1 | 6 | Small "B" for Building | January 20, 2004; 9:00 am |
| ZSNCB-2003-022-090 | TALUSAN Zamboanga Sibugay | Cawilan ES<br>Mahayahay ES<br>Tuburan ES | 1 | 6 | Small "B" for Building | January 21, 2004; 9:00 am |
| ZSNCB-2003-023-091 | TITAY Zamboanga Sibugay | Dalisay ES<br>Kitabog ES<br>Supit ES | 1 | 6 | Small "B" for Building | January 20, 2004; 9:00 am |
| ZSNCB-2003-024-092 | TUNGAWAN Zamboanga Sibugay | Baluran ES<br>Balungan ES<br>Linguisan ES<br>Sisay ES | 1 | 7 | Small "B" for Building | January 20, 2004; 9:00 am |

3. Bidding documents may be purchased at DepEd Division Office of *Zamboanga Sibugay* with address at Tirso Babiera, Ipil, Zamboanga Sibugay for a nonrefundable fee of P2,500.00 for each set. Interested bidders may obtain further information at the same address.
4. Bids shall be valid for a period of ninety (90) days after Bid opening and must be accompanied by a security in the amount of 2.5% of total bid price, and shall be delivered to Division's Bids and Awards Committee, Department of Education – Division Office of Zamboanga Sibugay, Barangay Tirso Babiera, Ipil, Zamboanga Sibugay on or before *the date stipulated in the above table corresponding to its package numbers* in the presence of the bidders who wish to attend.
5. For clarification, a Pre-bid Conference will be conducted on January 6, 2004 at 9:00 AM at the Office of the Schools Division Superintendent, Division of Zamboanga Sibugay, Ipil, Zamboanga Sibugay

(Sgd.) ROGELIO A. GOMEZ
Chairperson
Division Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI–December 19, 2003)

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Republic of the Philippines
Department of Agriculture
**Philippine Rice Research Institute**
Maligaya, Science City of Muñoz, Nueva Ecija

## INVITATION TO BID

The Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice), invites Contractors classified by CIAP and duly registered with PCAB to bid for the projects hereunder enumerated.

| Name of Project/ Location | Approved Budget | Contractors' Classification | Contract Duration |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1) R & D Building and Scientists'/Guest House; Philrice - Isabela, San Mateo Isabela | P10 M | At least Medium A | 120 CD |
| 2) Scientists' / Guest House PhilRice-Agusan, RTR, Agusan del Sur | 1.5 M | At least Small B | 75 CD |
| 3) Installation of domestic water system (development of groundwater source, installation of pump, overhead tank with 3,000 gal cap. etc;) PhilRice - Central Experiment Station Maligaya, Science City of Muñoz, Nueva Ecija | 1.5 M | At least Small B | 60 CD |
| 4) Seed Storage/warehouse (with cold room facilities) PhilRice-Midsayap, Midsayap, Cotabato | 3.0 M | At least Medium A | 90 CD |
| 5) Farm Operations & Mechanization Building and Shop and Crop Processing Shed PhilRice - Central Experiment Station Maligaya, Science City of Muñoz, Nueva Ecija | 5.5 M | At least Medium A | 120 CD |

SCHEDULE OF PRE-BIDDING AND BIDDING

| Activity | Time, Date and Venue |
|---|---|
| Submission of Letter of Intent | January 5, 2004, PhilRice, Science City of Muñoz, NE |
| Issuance of Bid Documents and Pre-qualification Forms | January 30, 2004, PhilRice, Science City of Muñoz, NE |
| Pre-bid Conference & site inspection | At least one week after issuance of Bid Documents |
| Submission/Opening of Bids | At least one week after Pre-bid Conference |

Interested parties may secure the forms and other requirements for registration at the PhilRice BAC Secretariat on December 29, 2003 only, upon presentation of a Letter of Intent addressed to the Executive Director and payment of a non-refundable registration fee of Php2,000. Only those issued with Certificates of Official Registration may apply for eligibility. Bid documents and Plans for each project will be issued only to eligible Contractors, after paying a non-refundable of 5,000.00 to P 10,000.00 depending on the cost of the project.

All particulars relative to the procurement of these projects shall be governed by the provisions of existing laws and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

For more information, please call the Infrastructure Unit, Physical Plant Division at Telephone Nos. 044-4560-285; 4560-2581 local 522 or 528.

PhilRice reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids thereof, waive any defects or formalities found therein and to accept or reject any or to award to any contractor whose bid is considered most advantageous to PhilRice. PhilRice does not guarantee award of contract under this announcement.

(Sgd.) LEOCADIO S. SEBASTIAN
Executive Director

(PDI--December 19 & 26, 2003)

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*The Board of Directors and Staff of*
**MULTI-INFRA KONSULT, INC.**
*mourns the passing of one of its Board of Directors*
**ENGR. NESTOR M. ABARCA**

*"I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the light of life."* John 7:12

## ENGR. NESTOR MAMURI ABARCA

*Peacefully joined his Creator*
*on December 14, 2003 at the age of 76.*

His bereaved wife **LUTGARDA**; children **FLORENCE-JEROME, MA. ANA FE, RICKY-CECIL, RORY-LARRY, BONG-LOUIE, NONA-GLENN, PHILIP-NICKY**; grandchildren, relatives and friends request the readers to pray for his eternal repose.

His body lies in state at 21 F.M. Maramag Street, Centro, Ilagan, Isabela.

Interment will be on December 23, 2003 after 8:00 A.M. Mass at the Ilagan Municipal Cemetery, Ilagan, Isabela.

---

So dearly missed
So lovingly remembered in loving memory of the
first death anniversary of our beloved

## ANTONIO " TONYBOY " K. PABLO

8 May 1957 - 19 December 2002

His parents, Mario & Rito Pablo; his wife, Joyce & children, Janna & Tonini; brother and sisters request relatives and friends to continue to pray for the eternal repose of his soul . We thank you for all your prayers, for all your mass offerings and kind thoughts during our moment of grief. Masses will be offered in the foll. churches:

St. Peter Thelmo, Aparri Cagayan
St. Peter Parish, Commonwealth Ave QC
Perpatual Help Church, Calamba St.,Sampaloc Manila
Makati Medical Hospital Chapel
San Lorenzo Parish Church, Tierra Verde TandangSora QC

---

> **"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life."**
> — John 3:16

---

## JOAN CAPDEVILLA COGUL

**of Reus, Tarragona, Spain**

embarked on his journey to the Arms of the Lord on December 17, 2003.

His bereaved wife Carmen, and daughters Jessica and Paula, request your prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

Memorial Service will be held tonight, at 6:00 P.M. and the Funeral Mass at 10:00 A.M., Saturday, December 20, 2003, at the chapel of Colegio de San Agustin in Dasmarinas Village, Makati City.

---

*"...absent with the body to be present with the Lord"*
2 Corinthians 5:8

## VICTOR C. SANTOS, JR.

**of Navotas, Metro Manila**

*has joined his Creator at the age of 59 on December 17, 2003.*

His wife **Alice**; children **Penelope** and **Glen Ganac**, **Liza Lara** & **Homer Vic** and **Alida Fay**; grandchildren **Bianca** and **Hanna Santos** and **Gabriel Ganac**; sister **Elvie Lizan**; in-laws, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Chapel A-1, La Funeraria Paz, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Cremation will be on Sunday, December 21, 2003, after the 3:00 p.m. Mass at Paz Crematory.

---

Our Dearest

## CYNTHIA "CHAI" ROCHA-BARON

*peacefully joined our Lord on December 17, 2003*
*at the age of 42.*

Her loving husband **Rolando**; children **Paolo & Anna**; parents **Doroteo & Delia**; together with **Omy & Diwi**; **Louie & Beng**; **Enad & Chona**; **Dellon & Joy**; **Theo & Pok**; with nephews and nieces, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Grotto of the Our Lady of Sorrows Parish Church, F.B. Harrison St., Pasay City.

Interment will be on Saturday, December 20, 2003 at the Heritage Park, Bayani Rd., Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, M.M. after the 9:00 A.M. Holy Mass.

---

## ARTURO B. TABIJE

*Died peacefully on December 17, 2003 at the age of 67.*

His loving wife **Perla Atendido Tabije** of Nueva Ecija; children **Cessel**, **Artus** and **Maricar**, **Arlin** and **Malou**, **Cherry** and **Dick**, **Kathleen** and **Joel**, **Arnel** and **Racquel**, and his only sister **Emma B. Tabije** request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at their family residence at Villa Angeles Subdivision, Orion, Bataan. The body will be transferred to Funeraria Paz Chapel on Sunday morning, December 21, 2003. Mass will be held at 9:00 a.m. to be followed by cremation of the body at 10:00 a.m.

---

*IN LOVING MEMORY OF*
*OUR DEAR FATHER*
On his 1st Death Anniversary

## *Dr. Emeterio Calayan Jr.*

(Dec. 19, 2002 - Dec. 19, 2003)

*His Loving Wife*
*Dra. Josefina del Villar Calayan*
*We Children*
*Drs. Manny & Pie Calayan*
*Drs. Armi & Toti Relacion*
*Atty Onnie & Susee Calayan*
*Drs. Baby & Oscar Brion*
*Dra. Cris & Benjie Abad Santos*
*Dra. Maybel & Joel Viado and*
*Grand Children*

*Offer our prayers and Holy Masses*
*will be offered at the following churches*
*Sanctuario de San Antonio,Forbes Park...6am mass*
*St. Alphosnsus Parish, Magallanes...6am mass*
*Sacred Heart Parish Church, Makati...7am mass*
*St. Paul the hermit San Pablo City Laguna...*
*all masses*
*St. Francis Church Mandaluyong City*
*7:00am & 6:00pm*

# CLASSIFIEDS

*Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas*
Maynila, Pilipinas
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

### INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Bids and Awards Committee of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) invites BSP and G-EPS registered companies/contractors to a public bidding for the **Replacement of Existing and Defective PICC-Screw Type, 500 Ton (TR) York Chiller Nos. 2 and 3.** Scope of Work includes furnishing of all materials, labor, tools, equipment, supervision and other incidentals required to perform: (a) dismantling of existing chiller nos. 2 and 3 and hauling to the designated storage, (b) modification of chiller foundation pads; (c) complete installation of new chillers, and (d) all items necessary to complete the work.

**Chiller Specification:**

500 Ton Capacity Centrifugal Water Chiller using Refrigerant 123 (R123), 440 volts, 3-phase, 60 Hz complete with all components, fixtures/controllers and materials necessary for operation including among others (a) Hermetic or Open Type compressor-motor assy & (b) Shell and Tube evaporator and condenser. Each unit must be supplied with unit mounted Variable Speed Drive Starter complete with voltage, current and temperature protection and must be adaptable to the existing chiller set-up in PICC and with total width per unit/frame of not more than 75 inches or maintain a clearance of at least twenty-six (26) inches between chiller units (new and old). All chiller components must be UL listed with minimum power factor of 0.95 at all loads and speeds.

The Approved Budget Contract (ABC) is P22,155,000.00

Target Completion Date: July 27, 2004

Minimum eligibility requirements are as follows:

1) Local supplier should have locally supplied, installed, tested and commissioned at least one (1) similar unit using R123 having the same or larger capacity;
2) The bidder should have a Net Financial Contracting Capacity (NFCC) equal to the ABC computed as follows NFCC = 10 (Current Assets minus Current Liabilities) minus (Value of all oustanding works under ongoing contracts including awarded contract yet to be started);
3) If the bidder is not the manufacturer, the bidder should have for the past three (3) years (reckoned from January 2000) a distributorship/dealership contract with the foreign supplier/manufacturer of the chiller to be supplied. The said contract should not expire before July 2005, otherwise, the local supplier should submit a notarized affidavit attesting that the contract shall be extended for at least 1 year and accepted by the Project Management & Development Office (PDMO). Submit a dated certification from the principal attesting these requirements; and
4) The manufacturer of the chiller should be ISO 9000 certified.

All interested parties are invited to attend the Pre-bid Conference that will be held on **January 14, 2004 at 2:00 PM, Room MR2A, 2nd Floor, Five-Storey Building, cor. A. Mabini and P. Ocampo Sr. Streets, Malate, Manila**

Bids documents may be obtained from Dec. 11 to Dec. 23, 2003 upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P1,000.00 per set of bidding documents at the following address:

BAC Secretariat
Room 212, 2nd Floor, Five-Storey Building
Cor. A. Mabini and P. Ocampo Sr. Streets
Malate, Manila
Tel. Nos. 524-7011 loc. 3097/3098

Bidders shall submit the bid documents i.e., eligibility requirements, technical and financial proposals in three (3) separate sealed envelopes to be dropped in the bid box located at the Office of the BAC Secretariat, at the above-mentioned address. **Deadline of submission of bids shall be on January 27, 2004, not later than 10:00 AM. Opening of bids will take place immediately thereafter. LATE BIDS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**

For more information, please call the BAC Secretariat.

The BSP assumes no obligation whatsoever to compensate and indemnify the bidders for any expense or loss that may be incurred in the preparation of their bids.

The BSP reserves the right to reject any and all bid proposals, or declare the bidding a failure, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) MARCOS J. SIONGCO, JR.
Chairman

(PDI-Dec. 19, 2003)

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Republic of the Philippines
NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Quezon City

### INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The **NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY (NFA)** invites authorized distributors/suppliers of Electronic Truckscales to apply for eligibility and to bid for the **Supply, Delivery, Construction, Installation and Commissioning of Pit-less Type Electronic Truckscales** in the following locations:

| Place | Equipment/Kind | | Approved budget |
|---|---|---|---|
| Narra, Palawan | 60 - Ton Pitless type Electronic Truckscale | P | 3,200,000.00 |
| Pili, Camarines Sur | 60 - Ton Pitless type Electronic truckscale | P | 3,200,000.00 |
| | Total | P | 6,400,000.00 |

The schedule of bidding are as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Submission of Letter of Intent | **Dec. 19, 2003 - Jan. 5, 2004** |
| Issuance of Registration/ Eligibility Requirements | **Dec. 19, 2003 - Jan. 6, 2004** |
| Deadline of submission of Eligibility Requirements | **January 22, 2004** |
| Issuance of Notice of Eligibility | **Dec. 22, 2003 - Jan. 23, 2004** |
| Issuance of Bid Documents | **December 22, 2003** |
| Pre-Bidding Conference | **January 27, 2004; 2:00 PM** |
| Bidding proper | **February 10, 2004** |
| Submission of bids | 1:00 - 1:45 PM |
| Opening of bids | 2:00 PM |

Eligibility and registration requirements maybe secured and submitted to the BAC Secretariat upon presentation of Letter of Intent not later than January 6, 2004 at National Food Authority - Annex, 5th Floor Tengsico Building, 101 E. Rodriguez Sr. Avenue, Quezon City. For further inquiries, please call Tel. No. **712-0454** or **749-9490.**

Bidding documents shall be issued only to eligible bidders upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P5,000.00.

Venue for the Pre-Bidding Conference and the Submission and Opening of Bids shall be at the NFA Boardroom, National Food Authority, 10th Floor Matimyas Building, 101 E. Rodriguez Sr. Avenue, Quezon City.

NFA reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any minor defect therein and accept the offer most advantageous to the government.

The NFA assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expense incurred in the preparation of their respective bid.

(Sgd.) GREGORIO Y. TAN, JR.
*Deputy Administrator & Chairman*
*BAC for Operations-related Procurement*

(PDI - Dec 19 & 26 2003)

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Republic of the Philippines
Department of Education
**THIRD ELEMENTARY EDUCATION PROJECT**
Bids and Awards Committee
DIVISION OF Rombion

### Invitation for Bids (IFB)

KBN – IFB NO. 4

**December 19, 2003**

**To All Qualified Bidders:**

The Government of the Republic of the Philippines has received a loan from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) towards the cost of financing the Third Elementary Education Project (TEEP) and intends to apply part of the funds to cover eligible payments for civil works component of the project. Bidding is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the ***Guidelines for Procurement under JBIC Loans.***

The Division Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for package 1: Repair of Fifteen (15) Classrooms with project reference number RBN-01/08-004/003-0056.

A. **Package 1: RBN-01/08-004/003-0056**
   **REPAIR OF FIFTEEN (15) CLASSROOMS**
   1. **Municipality of Alcantara**
      @Repair of one (1) unit – Four (4) Classrooms Imelda Type S.B. at Alcantara CES.
      @Repair of one (1) unit – Two (2) Classrooms Imelda Type S.B. at Alcantara CES.
      @Repair of one (1) unit – Three (3) Classrooms Imelda Type S.B. at Camili ES.
   2. **Municipality of Ferrol**
      @Repair of one (1) unit – Three (3) Classrooms Imelda Type S.B. at Ferrol CES
      @Repair of one (1) unit – Three (3) Classrooms RP-US Type S.B. at Hinag-oman ES.

Bidding documents may be purchased at DepEd Division Office of Romblon, Division Project Implementation Unit (DPISU) for Third Elementary Education Project (TEEP) with address at Brgy. Capaclan, Romblon, Romblon for a non-refundable fee of Php 1,500.00 for each set. Interested bidders may obtain further information at the same address.

Bids shall be valid for a period of ninety (90) days after Bid Opening and must be accompanied by a security in the amount of 2.5% of total bid price and a validity period of at least one hundred eighteen (118) days, and shall be delivered to the Division Bids and Awards Committee, Department of Education-Division Office of Romblon, Brgy. Capaclan, Romblon, Romblon on or before 10:00 AM, January 19, 2004 at which time they will be opened in the presence of the bidders who wish to attend.

A pre-Bid conference will be held on January 8, 2004, at 9:00 AM at the DepED, Division Office of Romblon in Brgy. Capaclan, Romblon Romblon. This document shall form part of the bid documents for the proposed projects.

(Sgd.) JOSE FREDDIE M. MOCON
Chairman
Division Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – December 19, 2003)

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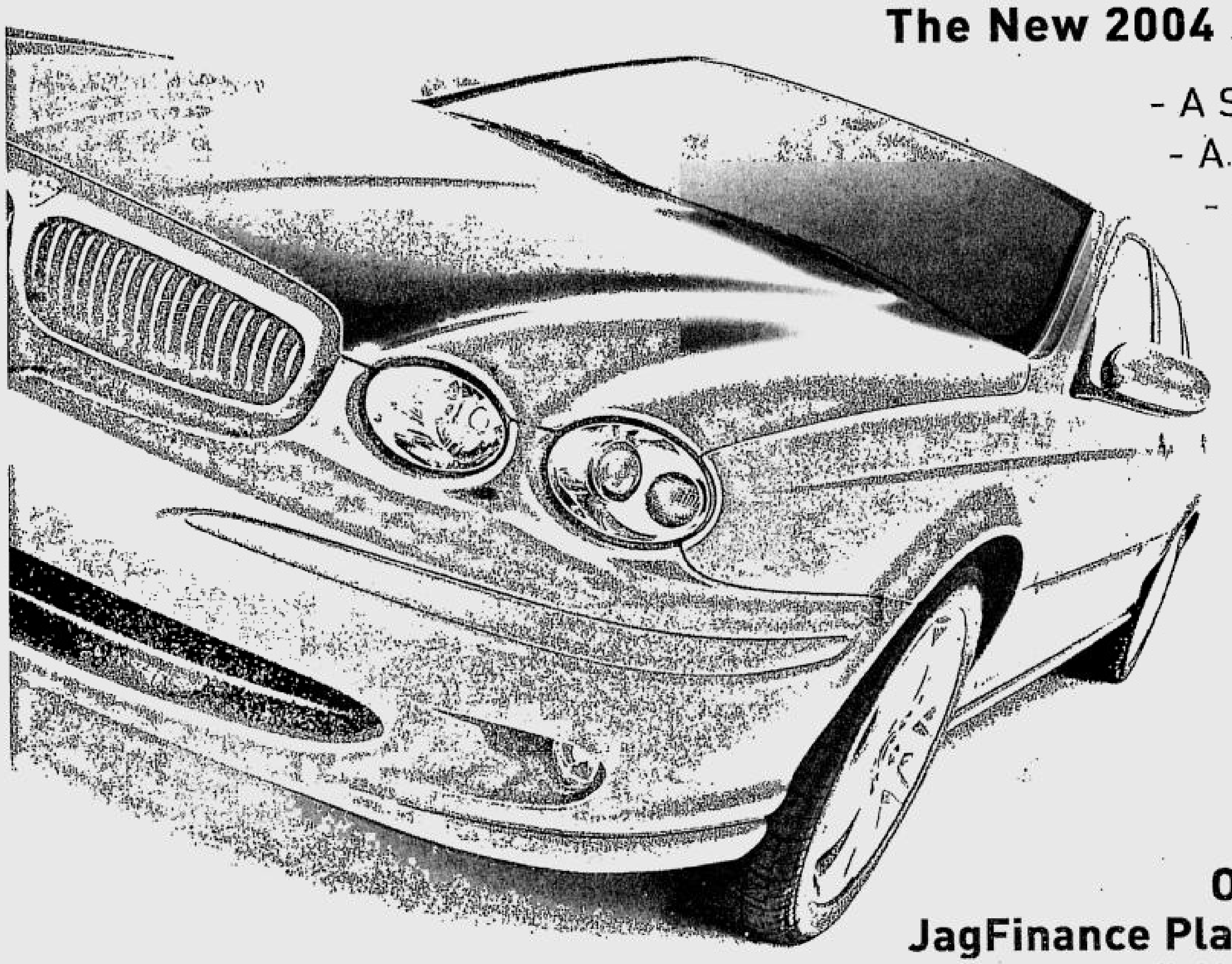

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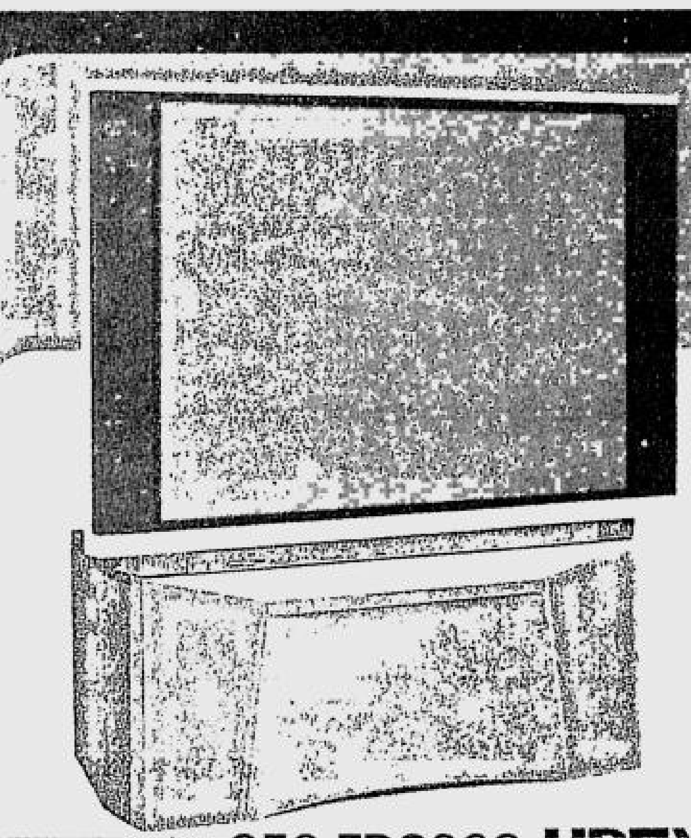

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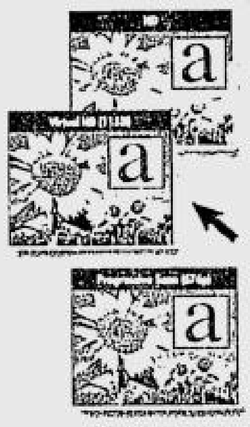

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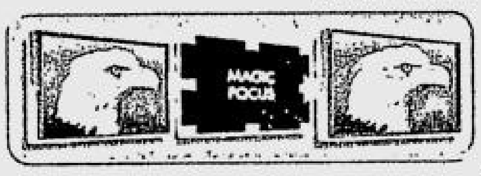

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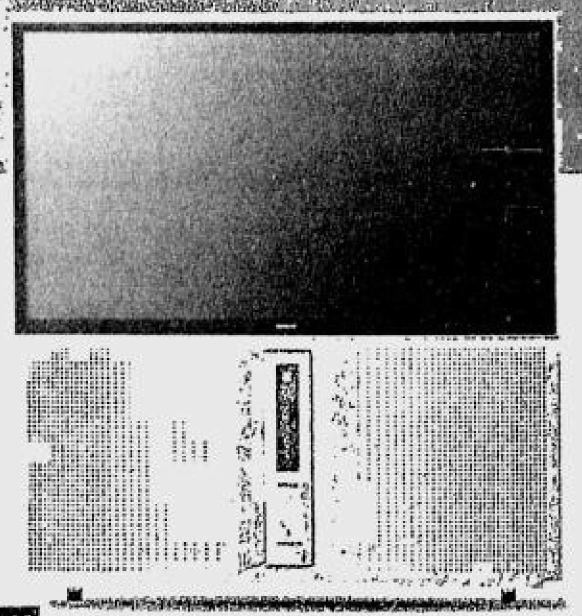

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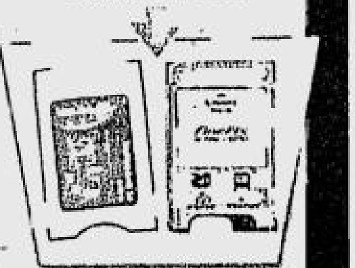
Headphone Jacks : 2 (Main & Sub)

SAMPLES OF MEMORY CARD ADAPTORS



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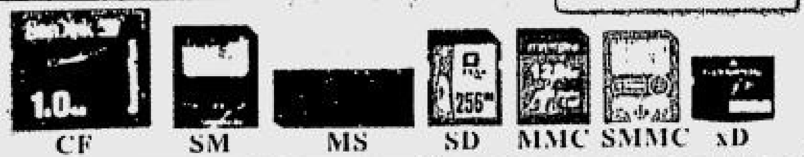

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C57-WD5000 HDTV READY

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Editor Louie C. Camino

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## Bong to recommend Edu as new VRB chair when he runs for senator /C5

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## Becca Godinez finds her own road /C7

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11 JEANNIE, BAKIT NGAYON KA LANG
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6 JEANNIE, BAKIT NGAYON KA LANG
7 MYSTIC RIVER
8 ELF
9 THE GRUDGE
10 LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
11 LOST ISLAND
12 LIBERATED

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2 HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
3 MR. SUAVE
4 LOST ISLAND

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2 RESERVED
3 STAR RUNNER
4 COLD CREEK MANOR
5 OUT OF TIME
6 SCARY MOVIE 3
7 RESERVED
8 ELF

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5238240

1 CABIN FEVER
2 ELF
3 LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
4 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
5 LOST ISLAND
6 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
7 BIKTIMA
8 JEANNIE, BAKIT NGAYON KA LANG
9 SCARY MOVIE 3
10 STAR RUNNER
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2 LORD OF THE RINGS: THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING 11:30, 3:00, 6:00
5 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2 10:50, 1:00, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, 9:50
3 LORD OF THE RINGS: THE TWO TOWERS 11:00, 2:30, 6:00, 9:30
6 THE GRUDGE 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:55, 9:00
7 INTERNET QUEEN 11:40, 1:40, 3:40, 5:40, 7:40, 9:40
9 CABIN FEVER 10:50, 1:00, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, 9:50
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2 ELF - 10:10, 12:10, 2:10, 4:10, 6:10, 8:00, 9:50
3 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
4 LOTR: FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING - 11:20, 2:50, 6:20, 9:50
5 LOST ISLAND - - 10:10, 12:25, 2:40, 4:55, 7:15, 9:40
6 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2 - 11:15, 1:25, 3:40, 5:55, 8:10, 10:00
7 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY - 11:30, 1:40, 3:50, 6:00, 8:10, 10:00

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3 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
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2 LORD OF THE RINGS: THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING
3 LOST ISLAND
4 CABIN FEVER
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|---|---|---|
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| JENNIE BAKIT NGAYON KA LANG? | 2 | JENNIE BAKIT NGAYON KA LANG? |
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| JENNIE BAKIT NGAYON KA LANG? | 2 | DARK BLUE |
| HUWAG KANG KIKIBO, SIYA ANG HIHIPO | 3 | ALIPIN |
| ALIPIN | 4 | INTOLERABLE CRUELTY |
| MYSTIC RIVER | 5 | LEGALLY BLONDE 2 |

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| RUGRATS GO WILD | 2 | LOST ISLAND |
| AKO SIYA IKAW | 3 | HUWAG KANG KIKIBO, SIYA ANG HIHIPO |
| STAR RUNNER | 4 | LOTR:FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING |
| GOOD BOY | 5 | LOTR:THE TWO TOWERS |
| MYSTIC RIVER | 6 | JENNIE BAKIT NGAYON KA LANG? |

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MYSTIC RIVER

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# 'Filipinas' shows reason to hope

By the Concerned Artists of the Philippines

"FILIPINAS," the movie, is about Filipinas, the country.

The setting is contemporary, as affirmed in the first few seconds by a cell phone-snatching scene. The movie revolves around the story of the Filipinas family: upper middle class, owners of a residential property and a few hectares of farmland. The siblings and other characters represent the different facets of Philippine society.

The story is narrated through Yolanda (Maricel Soriano), the eldest, a spinster. She manages the household and takes care of the needs of their widowed and aging mother (Armida Siguion Reyna).

Samuel (Richard Gomez) is a US immigrant.

Vicky (Aiko Melendez) is assigned to trade the produce of their farm. Her business is barely surviving as it cannot compete in a market flooded with cheap imported agricultural products. Not even a partnership with a financier, her fiancee, can remedy bad business.

Gloria (Dawn Zulueta) is an OFW. Back home, she finds herself alienated from her child and indignant over her husband's dependence and persistence on her being an OFW. Eman (Victor Neri) is an activist who has transcended his bourgeois roots and committed himself to workers' causes.

Narciso (Wendell Ramos) is a military officer. Not a typical soldier, he is idealistic, honest and handsome. He squeals on corruption in the military. He is assigned to Basilan.

Their individual stories do not unfold in a straight line. The scriptwriter and director craftily interweave their lives, revealing it part by part, little by little, giving it telenovela suspense.

But, unlike in telenovelas, the lives of the characters in "Filipinas" do not move according to chance; nor is success or failure based solely on individual perseverance or talent. Their lives are moved also by the nature and events of society.

The different persuasions and orientations of the siblings are enough reasons for disquiet. Mother Filipinas seeks tranquil repose in church and the calming words of the priest. When the priest reveals that he is leaving his vocation to take care of his son, she is dumbfounded.

But what really knocks out Mother Filipinas is the fight between the Americanized Samuel and the activist Eman. In the melee, she literally gets a fist and she falls unconscious.

The doctor diagnoses her condition as irreversible and leaves the family to decide on whether to take off the respirator, the only thing keeping her alive.

Yolanda asserts that the family should not lose hope and do everything to keep the mother alive. That is leaving the future to fate. This is the weak point of the story.

FILIPINAS/ C3

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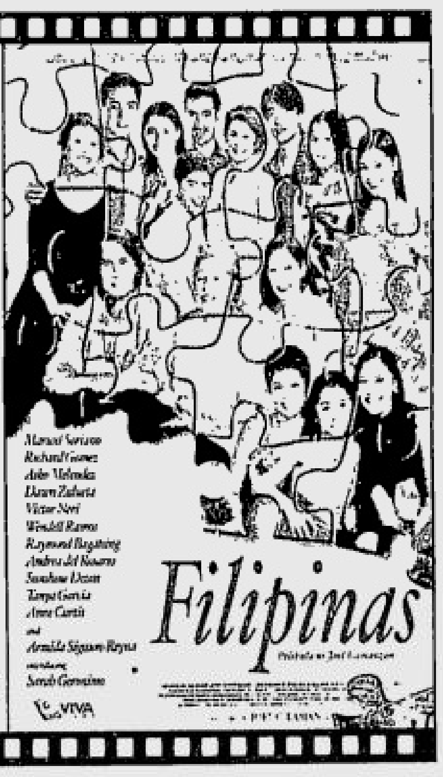

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| INTOLERABLE CRUELTY<br>PG13<br>1:00, 3:20, 5:40, 8:00, 10:20 | LOST ISLAND<br>R18<br>1:25, 3:35, 5:45, 7:55, 10:00 | LORD OF THE RINGS 2 "TWO TOWERS"<br>GP<br>12:00, 3:15 |

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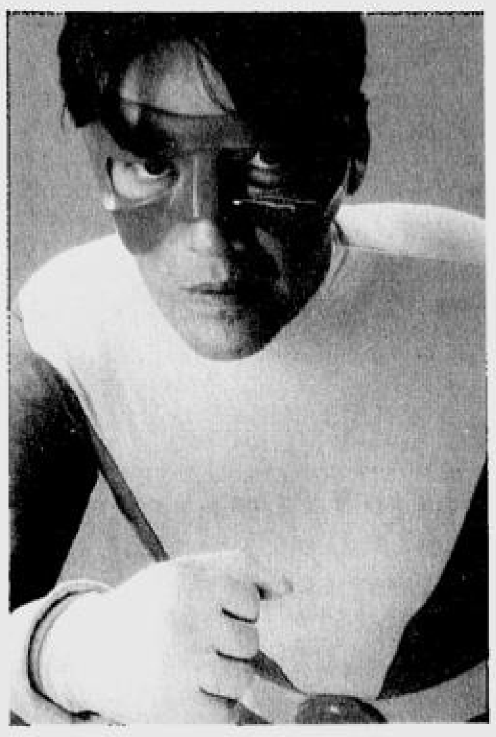
# Vic: FPJ can heal the land



**BUT A SUPERHERO** is not the cure-all for the country's ills, says Vic, in costume as "Fantastic Man."

**By Jocelyn Valle**
*Contributor*

JUST like his older brother Sen. Vicente Sotto, comedian and TV host Vic Sotto says he is supporting the candidacy of movie action king Fernando Poe Jr.

The senator is the spokesperson of FPJ.

Vic said that if needed, he would join FPJ in his campaign sorties.

"He's my personal choice not because he's an actor," Vic told INQUIRER Entertainment last Monday.

"He's a principled man," Vic added. "*Hindi siya sala sa init, sala sa lamig na katulad ng marami sa pulitika ngayon*. Those people have given politics a bad name. It's time to bring back the real meaning of politics. *Si* FPJ *ang puwedeng umayos sa ating sugatang bayan*."

But Vic dispelled rumors about his own political agenda.

"I've heard about it," he said. "But I'm busy with my work and my production company (M-Zet, which also produces his GMA 7 sitcom, 'Da De Di Do Du')."

He said an actor who enters politics should devote his time to the new job.

## The important thing

Vic, who plays another superhero in "Fantastic Man," Octoarts Films and M-Zet Productions' entry in the Metro Manila filmfest, also commented on the widespread observation that show biz personalities who run for public office don't know the difference between reality and fantasy.

"It's just a perception," Vic pointed out. "Being an actor is just like any other profession.

"It's just like being a doctor or a lawyer or a janitor. *'Di ka ba puwedeng tumulong sa kapwa mo porke't* janitor *o* clerk *ka lang?'*

"Does one have to be a magna cum laude or a titled person? Of course not! The important thing is that he has the heart to help the country. *Marangal naman ang pagiging artista*."

Everybody looks for a superhero, he said, and FPJ could be it. But he insisted that a superhero is not the cure-all the country is looking for.

"*Ang makakagamot naman sa sakit ng lipunan ay ang mga tao rin*," he declared. "We just need an inspiration. *Kung i-aasa lang natin lahat sa lider, wala ring mangyayari*."

"Fantastic Man," unlike his entry last year, "Lastikman," will open on Christmas Day along with six other movies.

## All-out comedy

Joining him in the fantasy genre is Premiere Productions' "Captain Barbell," with Bong Revilla in the lead and Christopher Malonzo in a cameo as Lastikman.

"Ours is an all-out comedy, compared with the other ('Captain Barbell') which is action-drama," Vic said. "*Hindi ko alam kung ano pa ang ipapakita nila kay* Lastikman. We've shown everything last year. He only has one power (to be elastic). There's nothing to show anymore."

"Fantastic Man," said Vic, centers on the conflict between Fredo, the ordinary man he also plays who becomes a superhero, and his ladylove Helen, played by Ara Mina as a librarian who gets possessed by an alien power and is transformed into the villainess called Diabolika.

"The message of the movie is love really matters," Vic said. "It conquers all, and it can move playdates."

# Stars at Walter Mart

**CURTIS**

TEEN star Anne Curtis and members of the San Miguel Beer PBA team were among the special guests at the grand opening of Walter Mart Center in Plaridel, Bulacan, last Dec. 5. This is the eighth in the Walter Mart chain of community shopping centers and the first in suburban Northern Metro Manila.

Head and Shoulders, which Anne endorses, sponsored free hair makeover the whole day for Bulacan women. She and Pido Jarencio, Sonny Cabatu and Boy Valero of the San Miguel Beermen joined the motorcade.

Standing over 14,000 square meters, the community center boasts of tenants like Robinsons, WalterMart Supermarket, Abenson Appliance Center, HomePlus Furniture, as well as Jollibee, Greenwich, Chow King and KFC.

The new Walter Mart shopping center is along the Cagayan Valley Road corner Plaridel Diversion Road.

**FUND-RAISING PREMIERE**
**The Hope for Cancer Foundation will hold a fund-raising premiere showing of "Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King," on Monday, Dec. 22, at 6 p.m., at Teatro Aguinaldo in Camp Aguinaldo. The foundation also has a pre-event preview at Cafe Lupe in Guadalupe, Makati, tomorrow, Saturday, 1-4 p.m. In both events, Erik Mana will perform his "Street Magic." The foundation funds treatment of curable types of cancer and provides non-financial support to patients, says foundation president, Mitos Zshornack (fourth from left). With her are (from left) treasurer Evelyn Ang, Swiss Ambassador Lise Favre, Dr. Sylvia Kurer, and PGH medical oncology head Dr. Cora Ngelangel.**

# *Bikini contest raises funds for Iligan RC*

THE "HOT Bikini in December" swimwear show will be held on Saturday, Dec. 20, in Iligan City, featuring 14 local male and female models.

The project aims to raise funds for the Philippine National Red Cross-Iligan Chapter.

The venue is at Batc in Palao, Iligan City. Tickets are available at Boy Basilio Salon. Call 0919-4015707.

# 'Filipinas'...

From page C2

Symbolically, however, it sends the message that no matter how dire the state of affairs of Filipinas, our country, we should not lose hope and we should do what we can to save it.

The actors are shoo-ins for acting awards. The crying scene in the burial of Narciso is a bit extended, but, overall, the pacing is fast. Sex is nil; if the scene of a bare breasted male and a female in a lacy nightgown is sexy, then it's almost nil.

There is a sprinkling of contrived dialogue. Drama is abundant.

All considered, to quote Bien Lumbera, film critic and Magsaysay Awardee for Literature, "Seldom does a movie refer to current events and allow the audience to understand society." Watch "Filipinas." There is reason to hope.

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*Crying Ladies is about life. The characters are interesting. Lakas ng dating!*

"MAGBAGO" by Parliament Syndicate:
*The song could very well describe the movie's charcters in the sense that they needed change in their lives.*

"MADPAKA" by Parokya ni Edgar:
*The movie was very entertaining. It was like a slice of life. The characters are colorful... nakakatuwa.*

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**FATHER** - Kuh Ledesma
**INNER STRENGTH (Keep the Faith)** - Aliya Parcs
**WITH U AROUND** - Artstrong
**STAY** - Boom & Angel of Kulay
**MY IMAGINATION** - Akafellas/SYKE/Gloc9/Raymund Marasigan
**PARA SA IYO** - Serendipity
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# How to fight the film pirates

### VIEWFINDER

*Nestor U. Torre*

THE FILIPINO movie industry is reeling from the onslaught of film pirates, who have reduced by at least one-third the income that producers usually derive from the screening of their products.

To fight the film pirates, local producers have come out with an institutional spot that's aired on TV, and during intermission in movie theaters.

The spot's thrust is to make viewers feel guilty about buying cheap pirated tapes of new films, because they would be helping to kill the Filipino film industry, on which hundreds of thousands of workers and their family members depend for their livelihood.

In the United States, movie pirates are also threatening the film industry with extinction, and the loss of thousands of jobs. That's why the Motion Picture Association of America has been airing a 30-second public-service announcement on TV and in moviehouses, in which film workers talk about the number of jobs that would be lost if movie piracy remains unchecked.

The MPAA is working with the Junior Achievement Organization to discuss the problem as part of class assignments in grade school. It also has an ongoing campaign to persuade college students to refuse to support pirated movies and TV shows.

It is estimated that US producers' losses due to piracy amount to at least $3 billion a year. Adding to their woes are new forms of digital piracy, including online swapping of digital productions.

Will producers' efforts to foil the pirates' nefarious activities work? Their TV-film public-service announcements may make people aware of the problem, but it's up to the viewers themselves to stop buying pirated products, even if they're cheaper.

Is this in fact happening? Alas, quite a number of people are still patronizing pirated tapes. They know what they're doing to the movie industry and its workers, but they continue to purchase un-copyrighted products.

We hope that governments won't be forced to catch and penalize buyers of pirated tapes for this nefarious practice to stop. Buyers, beware—of your own complicity and potential liabilities and penalties when you persist in playing footsies with the pirates.

## Future wave

SPEAKING of digital movies online, a number of top Hollywood companies have made their films available on a new distribution service on the Net, despite fears of possible piracy.

The distribution of movies online is seen as the wave of the future, so major studios are trying it, hoping that more safeguards will soon be instituted to foil the unauthorized downloading of their more popular titles.

The Movielink digital distribution service started less than a year ago with only 175 titles, but more studios have joined the service, so its catalogue now offers 400 movies.

Six major film companies have joined the service. The latest to sign on is the Disney studio, which put 50 of its titles on Movielink. One of the last major holdouts is Fox, but hopes are high that it could soon be persuaded to join its competitors.

Digital movies online are seen as a very promising trend because they make film-watching easier, more convenient and ultimately more economical than the usual procedure of traveling to a theater, paying for your ticket, buying snacks, then driving back home. That's why producers are placing their bets on it—despite the threat of piracy.

## Dec. 31 show

PUNK rock superstars Simple Plan have been tapped to perform on MTV's New Year's celebration live from Times Square on Dec. 31. Other stellar performers include Hilary Duff, Ludacris and Chingy.

In addition, the quintet's platinum-selling debut "No Pads, No Helmets" has consistently appeared on the Billboard 200 for the past year. And it's becoming even more popular, despite its long exposure. It sold 35,976 copies last week, marking the band's biggest sales week ever.

Why is Simple Plan such a hit with listeners? Veteran observers of the music scene cite a variety of factors, including a string of Top 10 radio hits, including the band's current hit single, "Perfect," now officially at No. 7 and climbing the Top 40 chart.

THE BIGGEST FANTASY-COMEDY MOVIE OF THE YEAR
ANG PABORITONG SUPERHERO NG BAYAN
ARA MINA MICHAEL V.
ZOREN LEGASPI LEO MARTINEZ DANICA SOTTO
INTRODUCING
ALICIA MAYER
VIC SOTTO
FANTASTIC MAN
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DOLBY IN SELECTED THEATRES
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MALIKMATA
HANDA KA NA BANG MATAKOT?
DIRECTED BY JOSE JAVIER REYES dgpi
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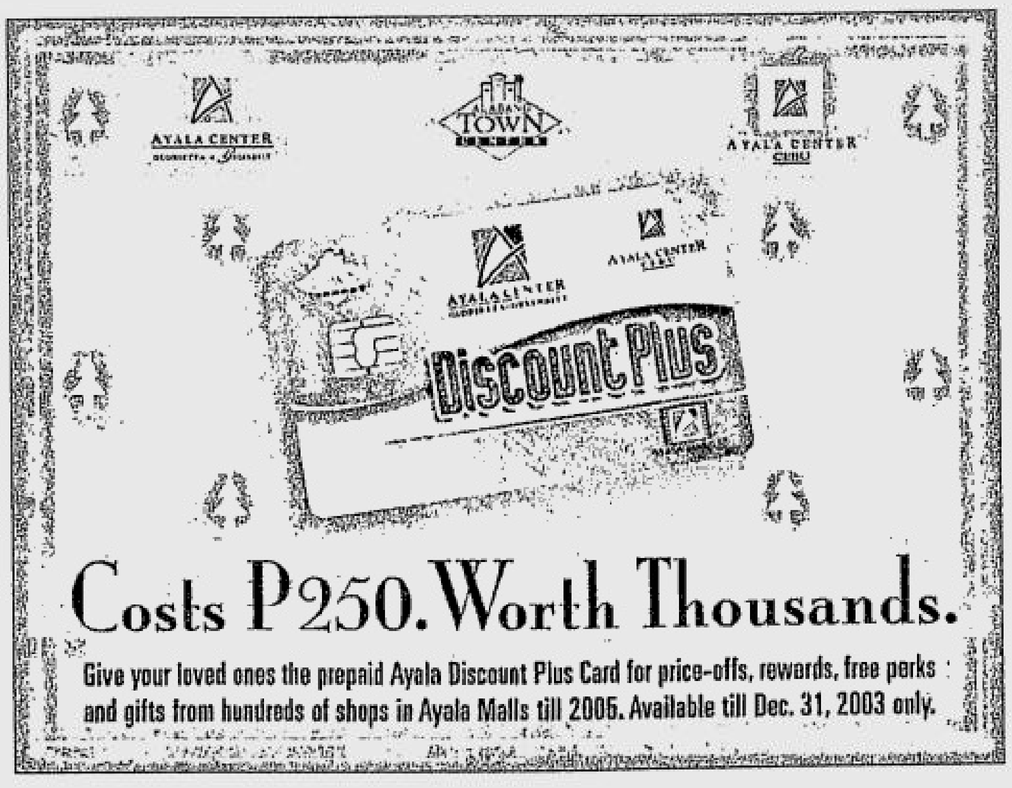
ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK FROM OCTOARTS - ORBIT MUSIC
CANARY FILMS PRESENTATION
DOLBY IN SELECTED THEATRES
Distributed by: OctoArts FILMS
OPENS DECEMBER 25



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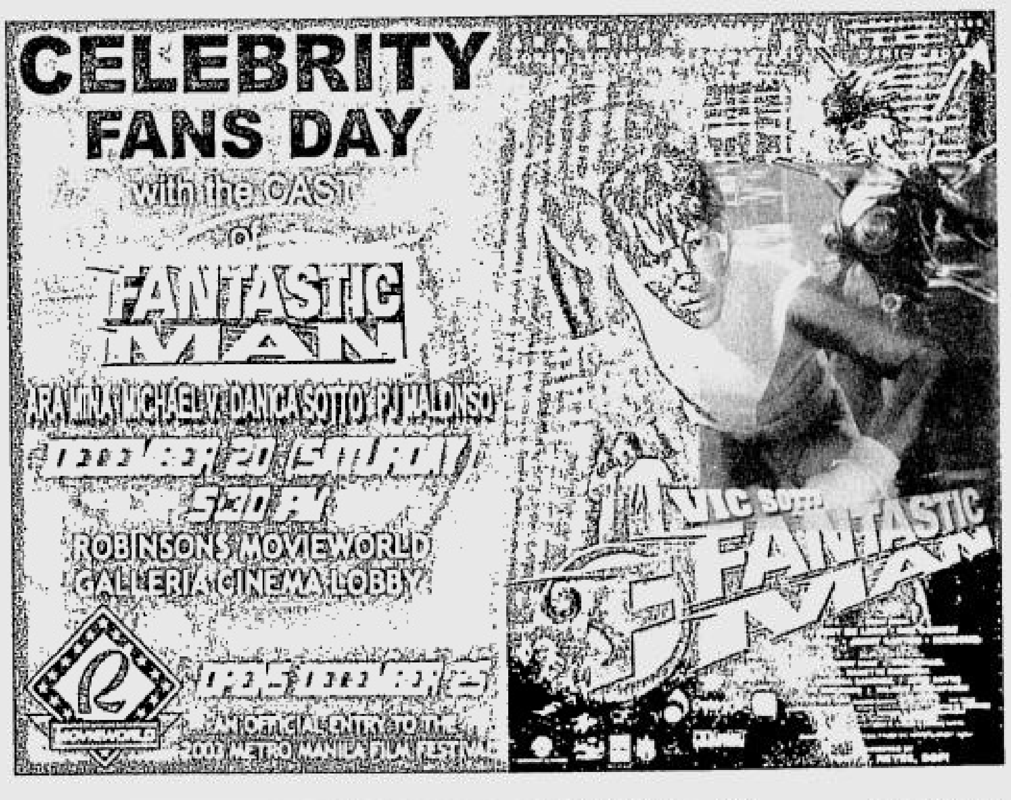

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GALLERIA CINEMA LOBBY
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Globe
THE LORD OF THE RINGS
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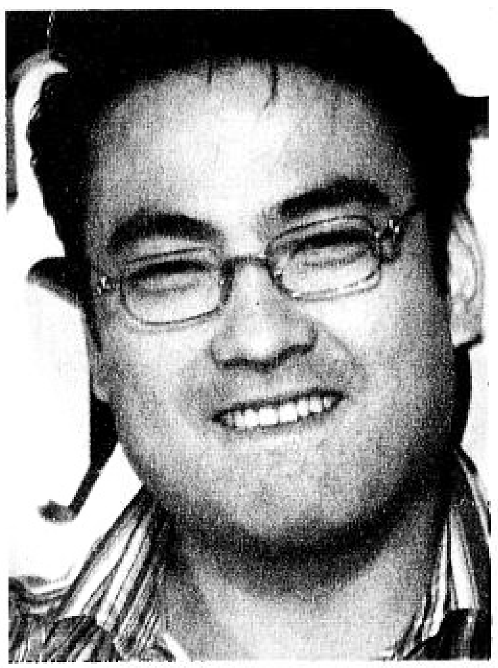
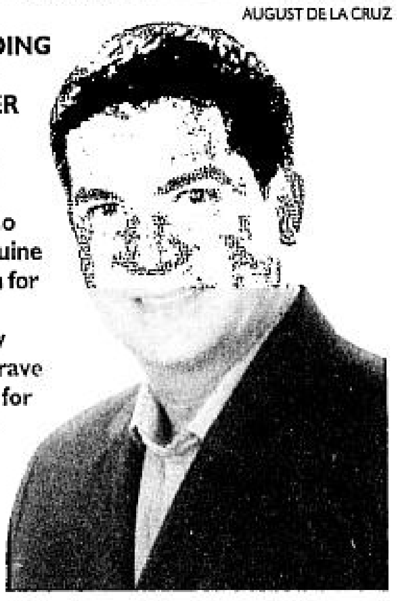
# Bong wants Edu to take over VRB

**By Leah C. Salterio**
*Contributor*



AUGUST DE LA CRUZ



**OUTGOING PIRATE FIGHTER Revilla (above) says Manzano has genuine concern for the industry and is brave enough for the job.**

BEFORE the year ends, actor Bong Revilla Jr. will resign from his government post as chair of the Videogram Regulatory Board (VRB) and file his certificate of candidacy for senator under the ruling Lakas party.

The action star and former Cavite governor said he will endorse his fellow actor Edu Manzano to President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo as his replacement. The VRB chair is appointed by the President.

"Actually, once I file for my certificate of candidacy, I will automatically give up my position as VRB chair," Bong told INQUIRER Entertainment on Wednesday.

"I know Edu, that's why I'm endorsing him," he added. "Nothing is official yet, but I can put in a good word for him to the President.

"Edu has genuine concern for the movie industry," he added. "He had also served as Makati vice mayor, so I know he can do good work at the VRB. He's brave enough for the job and I know he will be committed to the anti-piracy cause and continue what I've started."

Bong was appointed VRB chair in the middle of 2002. He said that in his 15 months in office, he has confiscated P5.3 billion worth of duplicating machines and fake video discs. He has conducted more than a dozen raids in Metro Manila and in the provinces. He has also sent to jail a total of 23 video pirates.

For the transition period after Bong's resignation, VRB Vice Chair Lualhati Buenafe will serve as officer-in-charge before President Macapagal appoints the new VRB chair.

The Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats (CMD) party is reportedly lining up Bong as one of its senatorial candidates for the May 2004 elections.

In a recent survey on senatorial candidates, Bong was No. 3, after Sen. Loren Legarda and former senator Miriam Defensor-Santiago.

Bong clarified he would not switch political parties even after action king Fernando Poe Jr., a sponsor at his and Lani Mercado's wedding, announced that he would run for president as standard bearer of the opposition.

"It's hard being a political butterfly," Bong said. "I'll stick to Lakas because it has been my party since the start of my political career. I've been a loyal Lakas member. *Ninong* Ronnie will always have my respect and love."

Bong said that even if he gets elected senator, he will continue to make movies even if only once a year. He plays the title role in "Captain Barbell" in this year's Metro Manila Film Festival.

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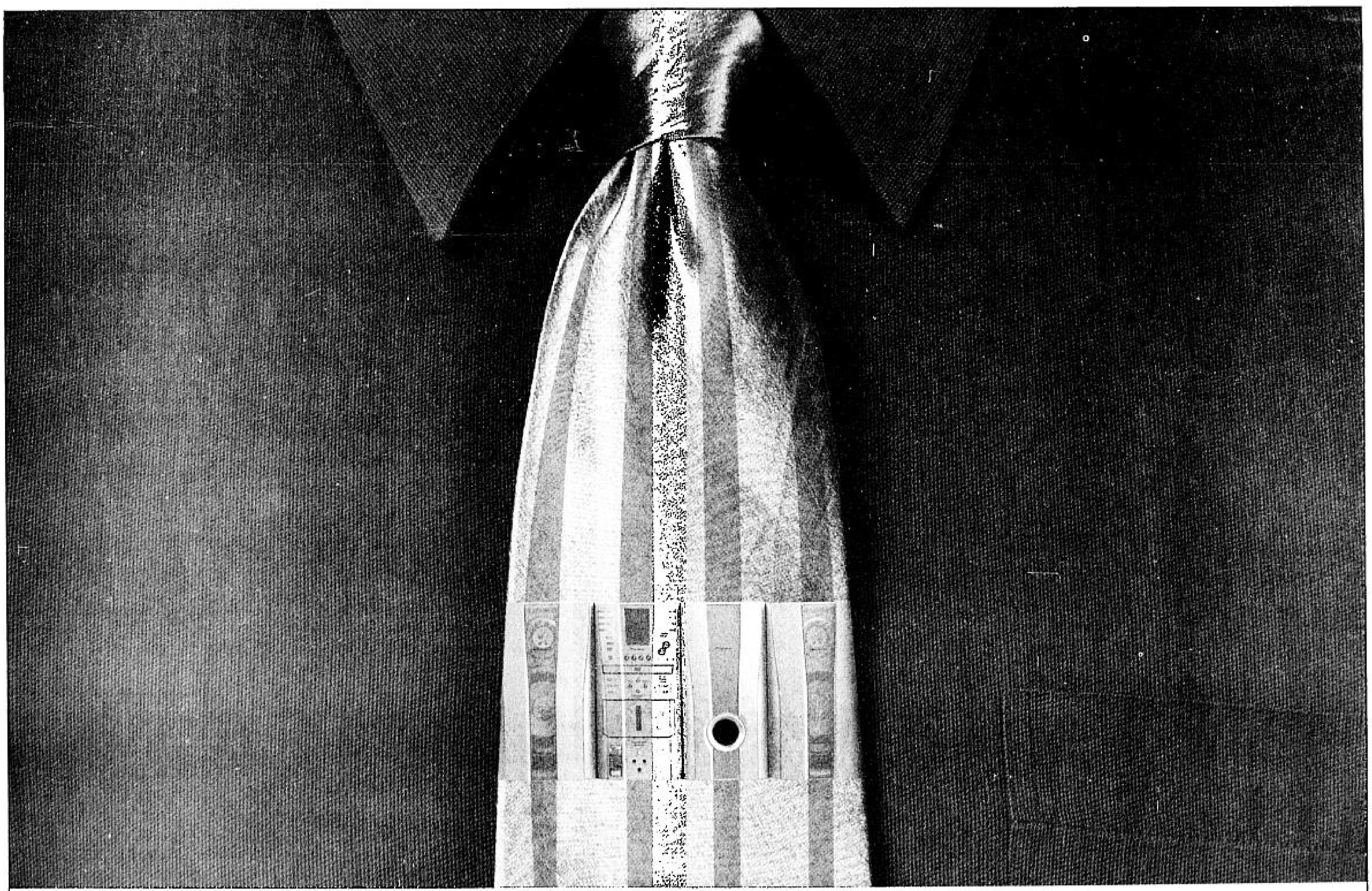

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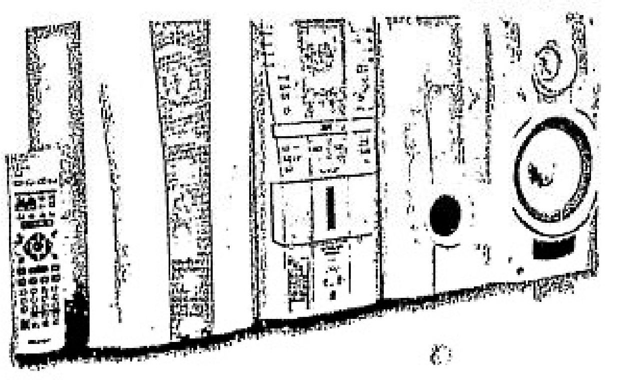

# What Elijah Wood doesn't want to be

LOS ANGELES—There is one Hollywood career Elijah Wood, star of "The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King," does not want to emulate—Mark Hamill's.

Wood, 22, is not slighting Luke Skywalker of 1977's "Star Wars." Rather, he knows that playing the key character in a series of hits like the "Rings," "Star Wars," or "James Bond" films often leaves fans unable to distinguish between the movie role and the actor.

With Hamill, future parts became sparse and the actor's star fell fast after the Star Wars series, although he has been doing animation and video games, and had numerous television roles.

"There are a lot of factors why Mark Hamill got stuck in the Luke Skywalker zone, partially because of how massive that whole thing became and there hadn't quite been anything like it," Wood told Reuters. "Also because nobody knew who he was before. They were only able to associate him with that role."

*Reuters*

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| ODEON-2 | BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN |
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| TANDEM-1 | SUGAT |
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| | |
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| ACT-1 | SENSUAL ISLAND |
| ACT-2 | KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT |
| ACT-3 | ORIGINAL SIN |
| ACT-4 | HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY |
| CORONET A | ALIPIN |
| CORONET B | A MAN APART |
| QUEZON-1 | BERTUD NG PUTIK |
| REMAR | X-MEN 2 |
| REMAR-2 | BOLD STAR |

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|---|---|
| A | LIBERATED |
| B | AKO, IKAW, SIYA |
| C | |

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| CINEMA-3 | WAG KANG KIKIBO |
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| CINEMA-5 (DTS) | LORD OF THE RINGS 1 |
| CINEMA-6 | CHAVIT |
| CINEMA-7 | BABAE SA BREAKWATER |
| CINEMA-8 | ASBOOBS |
| CINEMA-9 (DTS) | LOST ISLAND |
| CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL) | LORDS OF THE RINGS 2 |
| CINEMA-11 (SDDS) | STAR RUNNER |
| CINEMA-12 | CABIN FEVER |
| CINEMA-14 | JEEPERS CREEPERS 2 |
| CINEMA-15 | ELF |

### LORES

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| CINEMA-3 | KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT |

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|---|---|
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| CINEMA-2 | FIGHTING TEMPTATIONS |
| CINEMA-4 | COLD CREEK MANOR |

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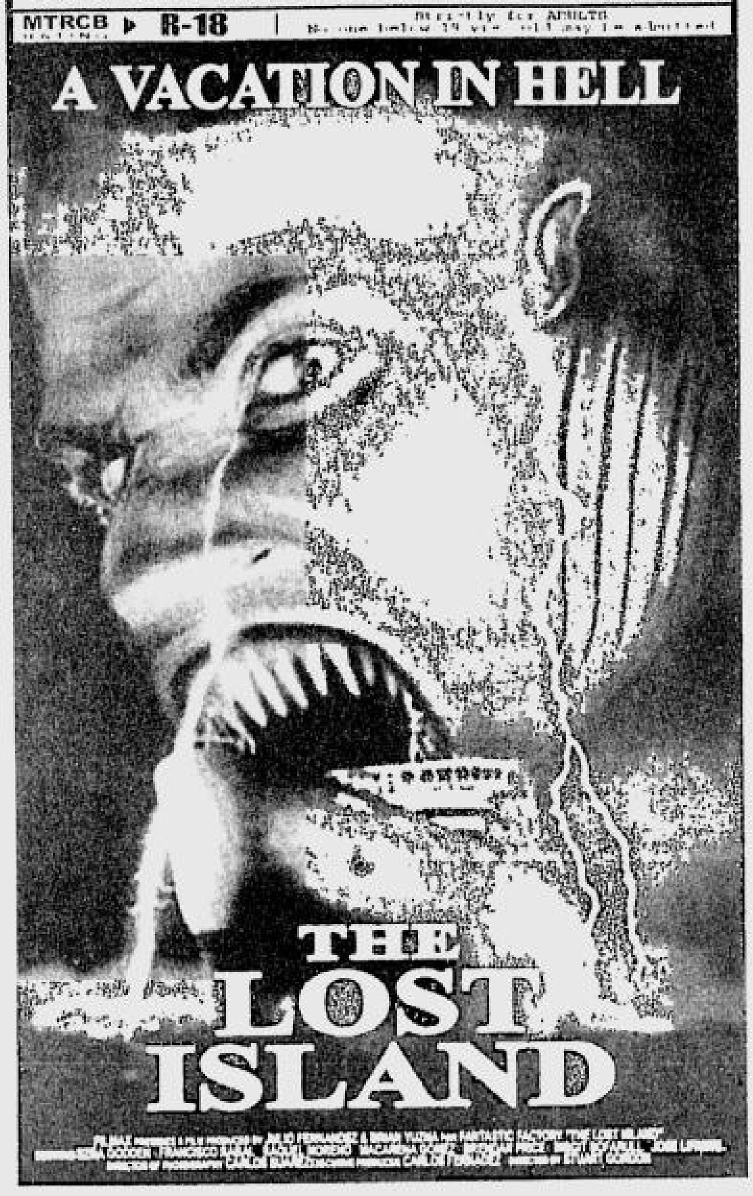

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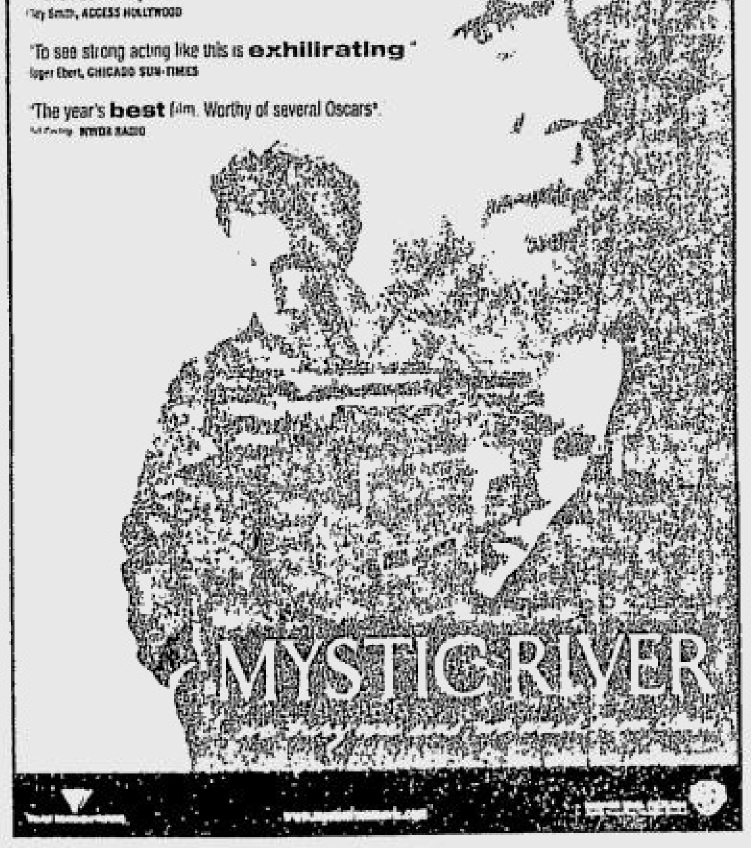

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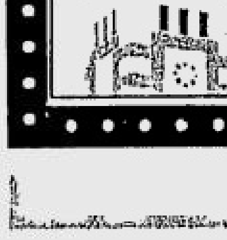

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FOR INQUIRIES CALL

# Becca Godinez finds her own road

**By Leah C. Salterio**
*Contributor*

*"There is a journey I've undertaken, a careful plan, an accidental trek across hills and valleys. I've meandered through a wonderland of triumphs and tears led mostly by the great me. I did not always do well as the navigator of my own design. At each fork, I listened to mostly me and lost purpose quickly on many of those colorful and treacherous avenues.*

*"More often, I would resurface bloody and broken. Yet . . . I threw the crutches, determined to find my way again. There are smoother lines today. Stripes earned, edges honed by an inner voice that guides me through. His name is Jesus. I am willing now, to go where the winds bend the road."*

YESTERDAY

A VISIT to the website of Becca Godinez (www.becca-godinez.com) will show that poignant intro to her home page. She admits today that nearly two decades earlier, when she was at the peak of her popularity, her life didn't have any direction, even if she enjoyed fame for her singing career.

After Becca became a born-again Christian in 1994, her life took a different course, she said.

"I was the Jane of all trades," Becca told INQUIRER Entertainment during a recent Manila vacation from her base in California. "I could act, sing, write songs and perform. But I asked myself then, 'What was I master of?' Nothing. It wasn't until I asked God to come into my life that I realized what my existence was all about. Everything became clear to me when I accepted God."

Becca gave this impromptu interview during the surprise send-off party for Martin Nievera, who left last Dec. 13 for Las Vegas, where he will again do a two-month series of performances on The Strip.

The party, which coincided with the birthday of Martin's mom, Conchita Razon, was organized by Marichu Vera-Perez Maceda and was hosted by her sister, Gina Vera-Perez de Venecia, wife of Speaker Jose de Venecia. It was held at the posh De Venecia residence at Dasmariñas Village in Makati City.

Martin's half-sister, Gina Tabuena, is married to Becca's brother, Jaime Godinez. The weekend before he left, Martin did a show at the Alabang Country Club and he asked Becca to sing two duets with him. At the send-off party for Martin, Becca also sang two songs. She was accompanied by Lorrie Illustre, Martin's musical director in his Las Vegas shows.

### Still friends

Becca was big in the local music scene in the '80s, but she left the country in 1985, when she was at the peak of her career, and settled in Rio de Janeiro with her first husband, Brazilian singer-songwriter Morris Albert, best known for the saccharine hit, "Feelings."

"Morris and I met here in Manila at the first Cecil Awards in 1982," Becca recalled. "We were married that same year and lived here for three years. We have a daughter, Natasha, who is now 20. But we left for Brazil in late 1985, a few months before the 1986 Edsa Revolution."

After a year in Rio de Janeiro, Becca and Morris moved to California. But their marriage turned sour and they separated in 1989.

"But we've remained friends up to this day," Becca said. "Morris is doing well in Europe and has remarried. Our daughter grew up in the States, but her values are very Filipino."

Becca has found a second chance at romance with Filipino-Spanish US immigrant Benito Miranda, whom she met in California in 1991. They were married in 1995. Benito is the president of Sipa (Search to Involve Pilipino-Americans). He also helps Fil-Am kids in depressed areas in Los Angeles and provides assistance to a group of senior citizens and war veterans in California.

"My (second) marriage is the most joyful thing that happened to me," Becca said. "I'm totally convinced that we're meant for each other. We laugh at the same *baduy* jokes. There are no cultural barriers, compared to my first marriage. That's so important."

### Anonymous in LA

Becca now lives in South Bay, California, "very near the LA Airport," with her daughter Natasha and her husband Benito. Becca is a big fan of ABS-CBN's The Filipino Channel (TFC), her source of news and entertainment updates about the Philippines. She has a corporate job and enjoys her private life to the hilt, she said.

"My job keeps me sane and productive," she allowed. "In California, I love my anonymity. It's so liberating. Reality hits you in the face and I like that. But up to this day, I'm still amazed that there are still Filipinos who recognize me. In the supermarket, they would say hi and chat briefly with me. But that's as far as they go. They always respect my privacy."

Becca is now recording an all-gospel album, "Road to Humble," whose 10 tracks she wrote. Her co-producer is sound engineer Kevin Click, who is a Grammy nominee, and musician Eric Fahlborg. She expects the album to be released early next year in the US and in Manila.

"This album is the story of my life," said Becca. "It's my journey. Before, I was asking God for direction and He guided me where to go and what to do. I thank God for sustaining me all these years. I think a lot of people can also relate to this album."

### Beautiful melodies

For somebody who chose to give up music in 1996, Becca insists doing the gospel album is a "no-brainer" for her. "I realized I could not give up music because it's something that I've been blessed with," she said. "Performing was a great part of what my career was all about."

Her good friend, Cita Revilla-Yabut, describes the album as "the kind that will make you want to listen to gospel music, without it being too preachy."

Even if she has been blessed with a good singing voice, Becca didn't discover her talent for songwriting until she started performing professionally.

"For my first album, I wrote a few cuts with Morris," she said. "When I got into singing, the Lord showered me with another talent, which is songwriting. I told Him, 'You could not have given me all these things.' I could not even play any instrument, yet God has allowed me to create beautiful melodies.

"In writing for my album, I would sing on tape the songs in my head. Two friends helped me with keyboards and the basics. Then we got musicians to add the sweeteners."

Becca, who hails from the small town of Bislig in Surigao del Sur, was discovered by radio jingle maker Ed Gatchalian, who visited her town in 1970.

"My dad was then the general manager of a bank and he invited Ed to our house," she said. "He told Ed he had a daughter who could sing, so Ed listened to me. When I went to Manila, Ed made me sing commercial jingles with his group. That was my first professional job."

### Coming home

Becca, however, went to the US to take up theater arts at the Fullerton College. Her classical voice coach was the mom of Bobby McFerrin, the jazz singer who popularized "Don't Worry, Be Happy." Becca also took up jazz lessons.

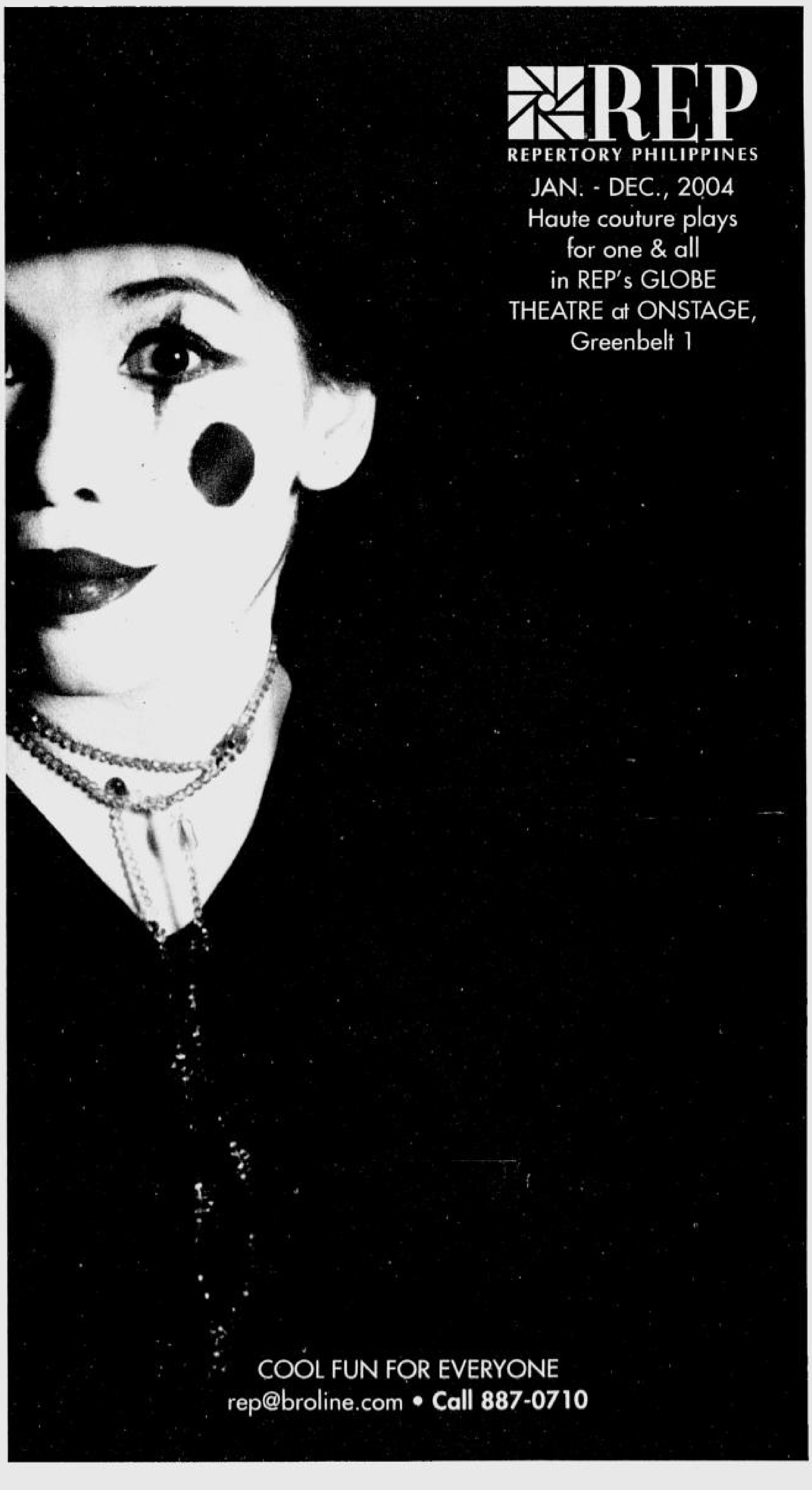
In 1977, Becca returned to Manila and acted in plays for Repertory Philippines. She starred in "West Side Story" with Ronnie Henares, Bernardo Bernardo, June Keithley and Gus Aldeguer. Nick Lizaso directed.

Prior to her visit early this month, Becca was also in Manila three years ago, when she and her husband took her parents to Spain for a monthlong tour, together with her daughter.

Becca said she will return to Manila in June 2004 for the 50th wedding anniversary of her parents.

"Who you are today is a culmination of everything you've gone through," Becca said. "All the trials you've encountered mean God is simply chastening you. Whom the Lord loves, He also chastens."

**"WHOM the Lord loves, He also chastens," says a chastened Becca (above, in California) of her former self (inset), the top '80s singer.**



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# Big night for Bayang

From page C8

Perennial Metropop interpreter Dessa and Reuben Laurente of The Company were in perfect harmony when they sang "'Pag Puso ang Nagsabi" by Soc Villanueva.

### Cheerful songs

Malik sang "Tahan Na" by Bobby Velasco; Gail Blanco did "Be There" by Trina Belamide; and the Akafellas interpreted "Beside You" by Dan Gil.

Agot Isidro and Arnee Hidalgo made the audience feel good with the almost identical cheerful songs they sang: Gino Torres' "When You Smile" as sung by Agot, and Mon Espia's "With a Smile" as done by Arnee.

Jolina Magdangal expressed the sentiment of a child caught in the crossfire between warring parents in Paul Galang's "Tulay."

Arnell Ignacio, the funny host of "K! The 1-Million Peso Videoke Challenge," was wacky in his troll hairdo and his interpretation of Jim Paredes' witty depiction of a hopeless romantic, "Parang."

Bayang, in her T'boli tribe-inspired costume made in Davao, didn't rely on the house band, led by musical director Gerard Salonga. Instead, she was backed by her own musicians, led by Mike on guitars and his twin brother Angelo Villegas on bass.

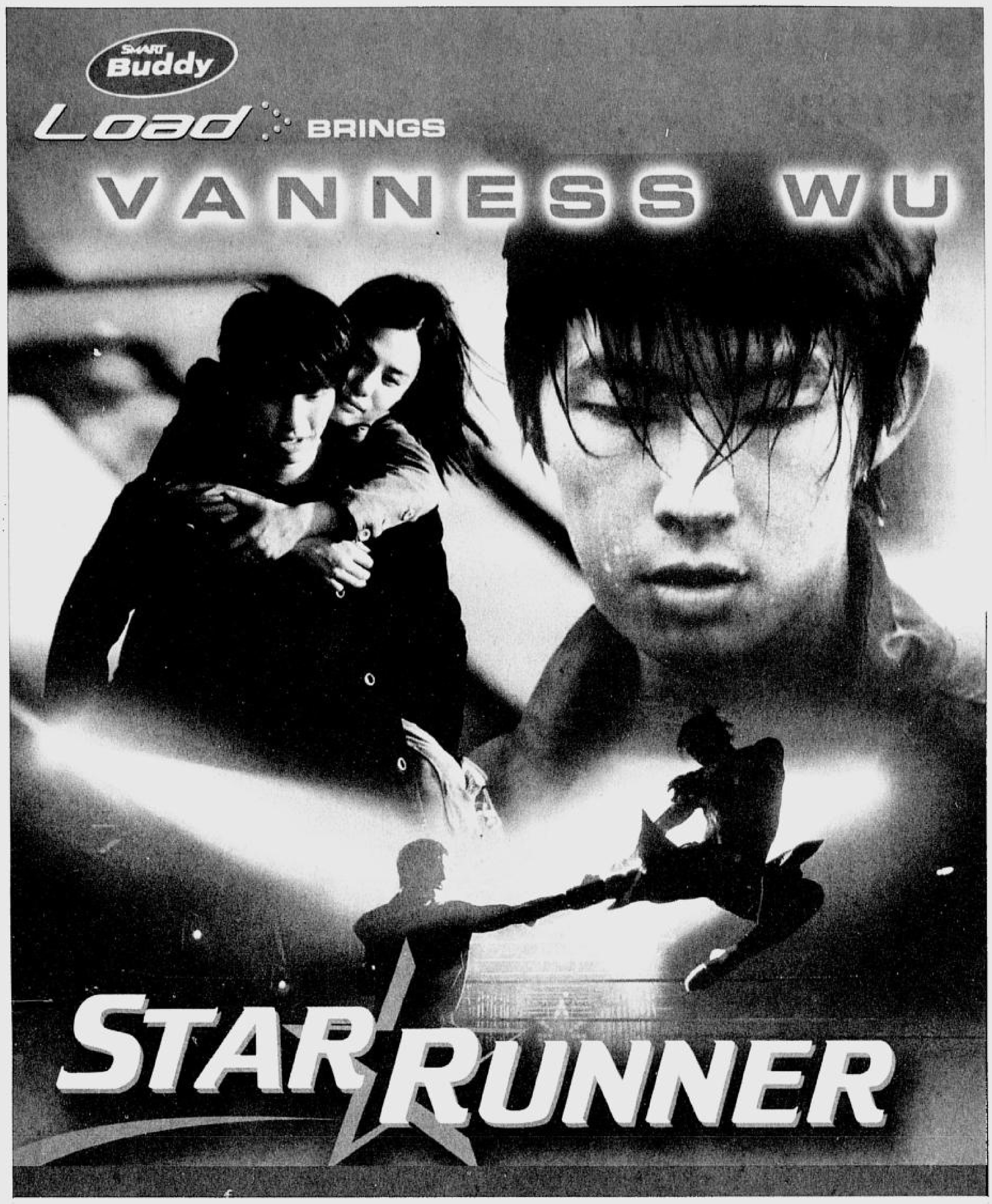
The show was hosted by Ryan Cayabyab and Pops Fernandez.

After the contest proper, Nyoy with Mannos sang, acoustic-style, Joey Ayala and Louie Ocampo's "Pag-uwi," Metropop winner in 2001 (the contest took a break last year).

Funny man Joey de Leon performed a medley of hits by the recipient of the first Kapuso Lifetime Achievement Award, Yoyoy Villame. Songs like "Butchikik," "Magellan" and "Mag-exercise Tayo" have truly added life and color to Philippine music.

"I've always wanted to join the Metropop but I'm already old," Yoyoy said in his Visayan-accented Tagalog. "And my songs are sung only in drinking sprees. But fortunately, in my time there was no piracy. I don't want to record an album anymore because it might be pirated. *Mag*-order *na lang kayo ng album ko para hindi ma*-pirate."

But if the celebratory mood at the Metropop finals' night was any indication, musical artistry will always prevail—yes, even in these uncertain times.



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**TEARS OF JOY** shed by grand prize winner Bayang Barrios.

# Big night for Bayang

SHOW TIME

**By Jocelyn Valle**
*Contributor*

IT WAS a night of vindication for musical couple Bayang Barrios and Mike Villegas at the finals of the Metropop Song Festival 2003, held at the AFP Theater in Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City last Nov. 29.

Bayang won the grand prize of P500, 000 and a glass trophy sculpted by Ramon Orlina for her composition, "Malayo Man, Malapit Din," which she also performed. Her husband Mike placed second and won P300,000 and an Orlina trophy for "Pretend that I Don't Love You," interpreted by Cooky Chua.

Jonathan Manalo copped the third-place Orlina trophy, plus P200,000 for "Buti Na Lang," sung by Kyla.

The music video of "Pretend that I Don't Love You" garnered top honors for its makers, the students of Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila.

Bayang later told INQUIRER Entertainment that in 1996, when GMA-7 resurrected the premier songwriting contest of the '70s and '80s, she and Mike had high hopes for their collaboration, "Bagong Umaga." They did not win. Danny Tan and Edith Gallardo's "Sometimes You Just Know," did, as interpreted by then emerging diva Jaya.

Bayang and Mike, who got married in June 2002, were so discouraged that it took them two years to write a song again, she said.

## No expectations

Bayang had no intentions of joining this year's Metropop, she said. The melody of "Malapit Man, Malayo Din" had been lingering in her mind for a long time, but it was only a week before the deadline of submission of entries that she was able to write the lyrics.

By then, Mike had already completed two tunes, both of which eventually landed in the short-list. The screening committee chose "Pretend that I Don't Love You" for the finals.

"Mine is just a simple song," said the 35-year-old Bayang. "That's why I didn't expect to win. I've learned from our past experiences that we shouldn't expect too much, and just enjoy being in the finals. But I gave my 180 percent (in performing my entry in the contest proper)."

Indeed, this year's Metropop reflected the dynamism of Filipino songwriters and performers.

Olivia and RJ Rosales' powerful voices blended well to lend passion to "You're All that I Live For," a ballad by hitmaker Vehnee Saturno and his lyricist sister Doris.

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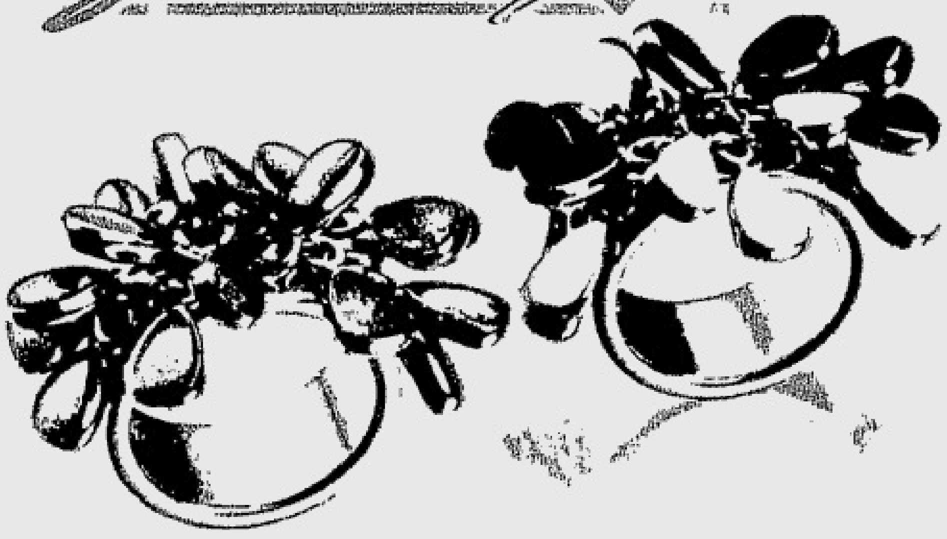
LIFESTYLE Trend Spotting

For feedback, text us at (0919) 880-3354 or (0916) 200-1160 or e-mail us at pr_lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

*Editor* **Chelo Banal-Formoso**

**THE SWATCH Bijoux Lustro necklace can be worn in various ways and is a great gift for young fashionistas.**



**LOVE Explosions rings from the Swatch Bijoux Collection are stylish and affordable baubles.**

# Gifts with oomph for your loved ones

## APPLES' PICKINGS

*Apples Aberin-Sadhwani*

SIX days to go before Christmas! Are you done shopping and distributing gifts?

It's always easy to find token gifts that you can give to just about everyone. A scented candle, a pretty picture frame or a bottle of wine are all quite common but still useful to the recipient. But what about special presents for those closest to your heart?

I usually save the best for last so I buy gifts for my husband, children, siblings, best friends and mother right before Christmas. I give a lot of thought on what to give each person, as I want him or her to feel extra special and loved. And if you are like me, it follows that you still have a bit of shopping to do.

Take a deep breath now and don't panic. Just take your pick from my picks of some of this season's most fashionable offerings:

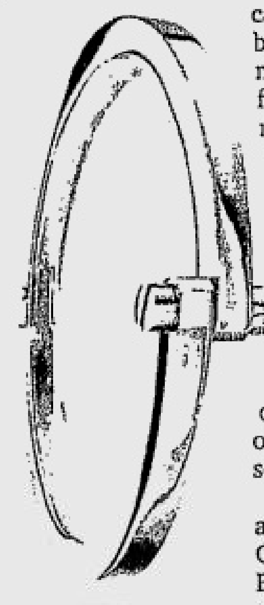
### Cartier's love cuffs

The perfect gift for your most special someone is Cartier's unisex Menotte bracelet. Seductively shaped liked an oval handcuff that opens and closes with the aid of a screw or a little bar, the sleek new design symbolizes attachment and love. Available in white gold and pink gold with or without cabochon-cut gems, the Menotte line also includes rings designed with the same graphical elegance and adorned with joyful colors and generous forms.

### The Jelly Kelly

Trends and Trendings columnist and Philippine Tatler editor in chief Anton San Diego called it the must-have bag of the season and I must agree. Every fashionista has this most coveted bag on their wish list, if they are not toting it yet. It's seriously fun and so much more affordable (and that's a major understatement) than the real thing. Plus, it comes in a variety of rainbow bright colors to suit one's personality.

The bags are available at Firma in Greenbelt 3 and Itsie-Bitsie in Malate but they are selling at an incredibly fast pace.



**CARTIER'S Menotte bracelet is a powerful weapon in the game of seduction, a piece of jewelry that opens and closes, sealing love tightly in.**

### Swatch Christmas collection

Best known for their fun, innovative

GIFTS/ D2

**DECK your man in Paul Smith's printed shirts from the Autumn/Winter 2003 Collection**

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# Careful, sexy curves ahead!

TRIUMPH International serves up a major temptation for those who want to take a walk on the wild side. Dangerous Curves, the new line of Triumph intimate wear that gives women a potent weapon to launch their own "dangerous missions," is now available locally.

Triumph's Dangerous Curves line is amazingly seductive. Made to mold and accentuate a lady's natural charms, the brassieres and matching panties seize every opportunity to enhance and flaunt all of a woman's feminine curves. The bra hugs and clings, like second skin, and yet gives support and lift where they are vitally needed.

Delicately molded cups provide deceptively strong support. The wicked, ultra-feminine straps are teasingly playful. They can be twisted and crossed, zigged and zagged, and adjusted to create any whimsical effect. The result is enticing cleavage, a knockout figure and sheer confidence.

The G-strings in the panties meanwhile are held in place by the finest stretch fabric, even as they expose tantalizing feminine curves. A word of warning for the faint of heart: The Dangerous Curves line all come in black.

There are Dangerous Curves bras with zigzag straps and matching low-cut tanga panties, those with crisscross design and matching ministyle panties that come in forest green and black and, finally, the ultimate temptation, bras embedded with Swarovski crystals that come in three colors—light blue, tempting red and mysterious black.

This assorted collection of made-to-fit strappy and detachable bras and matching briefs are now available at Triumph counters in leading department stores.

FOREST green version has peek-a-boo crisscross feature in cleavage area and triple spaghetti straps; matching low-cut tanga completes the seduction.

NEW Maximizer Dangerous Curves bra with never-before-seen zigzag straps

# Gifts with oomph for your loved ones

From page D1

designs and superior Swiss precision, Swatch has come up with a couple of limited edition festive designs to celebrate the season: the Jingle Jangle red watch with silver bells and a detachable reindeer and the Starmony brooch. But if you wish to veer away from Yuletide themes, then check out any of Swatch's latest designs for both men and women.

The Swatch Bijoux collection also offers stylish yet affordable baubles. My favorites include the Lustro necklace, which you can wear in a variety of ways, and the Love Explosions rings that come in red, blue or black and white.

### Personalized presents

It's always a pleasure to receive presents that are specifically made, labeled or monogrammed for the recipient. It shows that a lot of thought, care and effort went into the gift-giving process, which in turn signifies that the receiver is special to the giver.

Why not give out note cards or stationery with the recipient's name or initials? You can have them made in specialty shops like Personalize It, which is located in Powerplant Mall and Glorietta. Their items are inexpensive and they only need a couple of days to print out your orders.

If you want something a little more high-end, Paperie in the Powerplant Mall is the store for you. It's a bit too late to order personalized Crane's stationery, as it usually takes a month to fill an order but they also carry initialed note cards that are very beautiful and of the highest quality.

### Paul Smith printed shirts

Update your man's wardrobe by giving him a colorful graphic or floral shirt from the Paul Smith autumn/winter 2003 collection. In the process, teach him to be more adventurous in his manner of dressing. More and more men are opting to wear color and bold prints.

No, these hombres are not gay nor metrosexuals. They are just regular he-men who are learning to break out of the mold. Can't afford Paul Smith's line? Try Vittorio's dandified, colorful and multi-printed collection that's available in Sari-Sari.

### Chanel Precision Eclat Originel

Beauty junkies will love receiving Chanel's latest offering, a three-in-one maximum radiance face cream that moisturizes, smoothens and provides a luminous quality. It literally gives tired looking skin a radiant glow. I use it in the mornings and before I go to sleep at night and I can honestly say that it is one of the best beauty products I have ever tried.

At the risk of contradicting myself and sounding trite, allow me to say that the best offering anyone can ever receive is the gift of true love. Merry Christmas to all!

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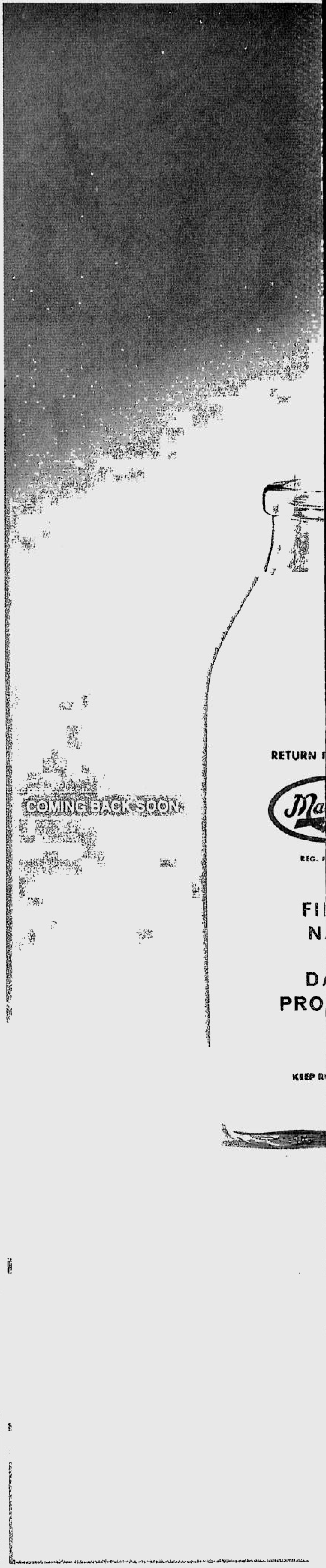
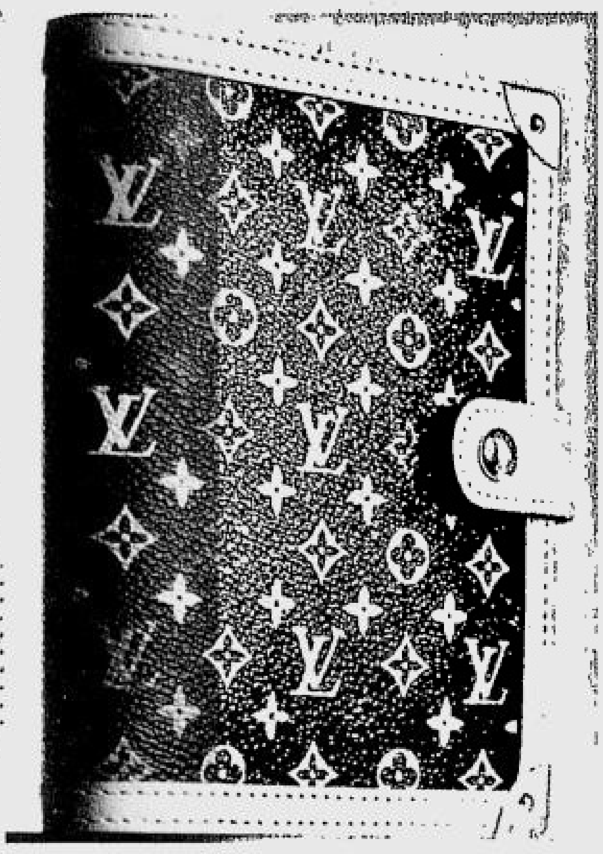


# All presents and accounted for

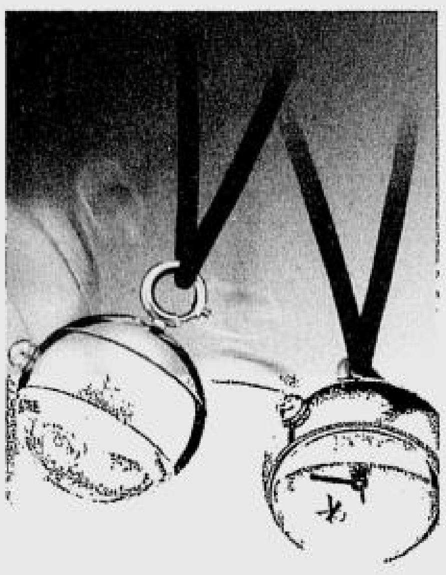


### Agenda for the day

A LOUIS Vuitton agenda planner, either in Suhali leather or Monogram Multicolore canvas, fits beautifully in every woman's bag. The Suhali goatskin agenda has natural grain that is soft and sensual to the touch. It comes in black, white, prune and cobalt blue. The Monogram Multicolore agenda comes in black or white canvas. On the occasion of Louis Vuitton's 150th anniversary, refills for the year 2004 will trace back the history of the House. Available at Louis Vuitton,Greenbelt 4, Ayala Center, Makati City.

### Tiny baubles

SPARKLE in these exclusive, limited-edition treasures: Lion Charm designed by Jennifer Connelly—made of white gold, blue enamel, blue diamond and engraved "be well"; Salamander Charm designed by Salma Hayek—white and yellow gold, onyx, emeralds, yellow diamonds; Horse Charm designed by Renée Zellweger—white and yellow gold and pink diamonds; and white gold Charm Bracelet, available at Louis Vuitton, Greenbelt 4, Ayala Center, Makati City.



### Time sharing

ELEGANT Swiss-made Alfex watches, dressy and big watches with colored straps like the new cK watches, watches with a sporty, masculine and techno-function look in durable steel cases and colored or stainless steel straps, Casio Sea-Pathfinder that gives the wearer a grasp of maritime conditions—these and more are the choices at Time Depot, with branches at Rockwell Makati, Robinsons Place Manila, Shangri-La Plaza Mall, SM North Edsa annex, SM Pampanga and SM Davao.

### For him

MEN'S accessories from Pierre Cardin make great gifts, from dress socks (P149) and smart neckties (P419) to snappy belts (P149 to P249), handkerchiefs and boxers. Available at Cinderella Ayala Center Makati, SM Megamall and Alabang Town Center.

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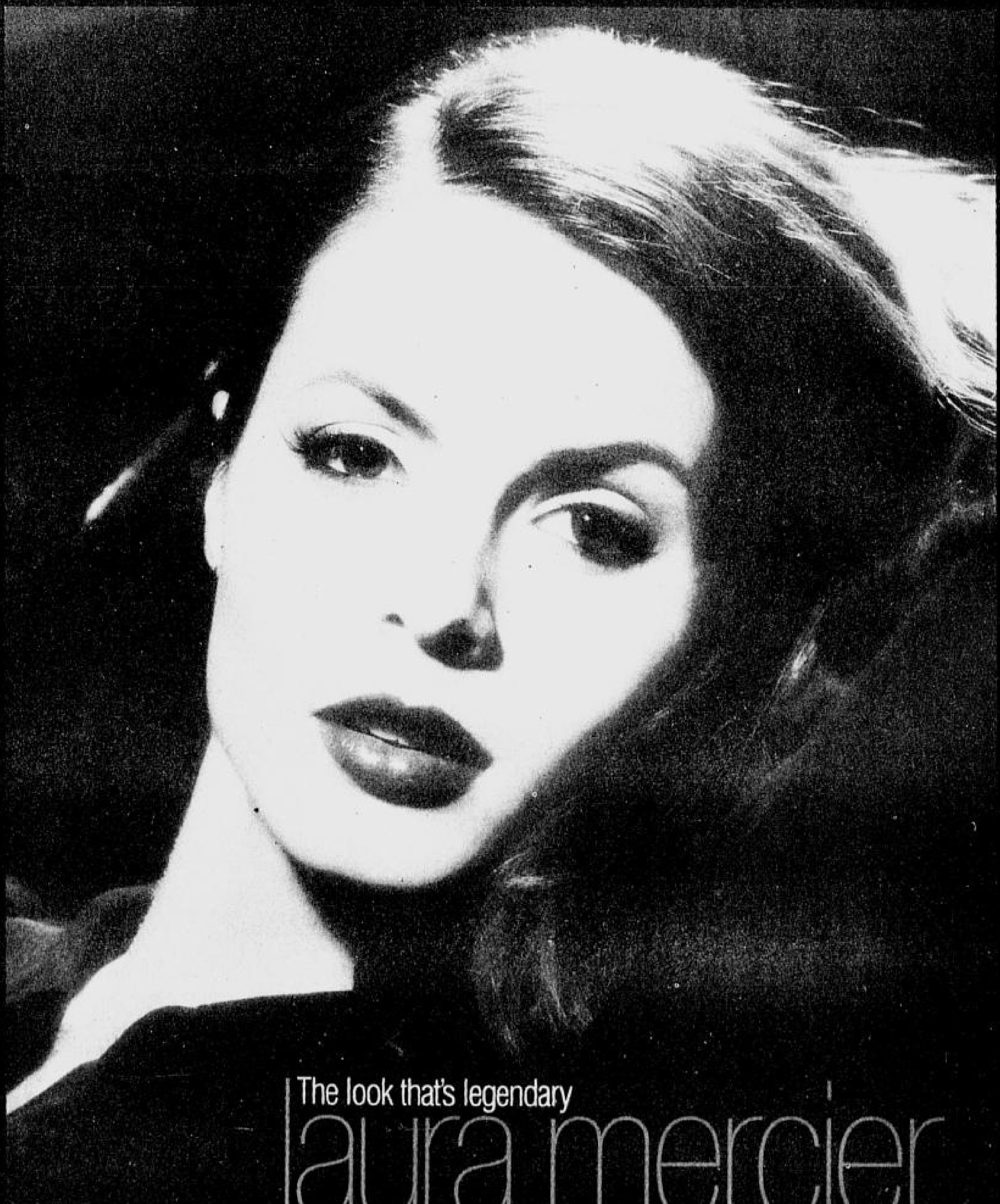

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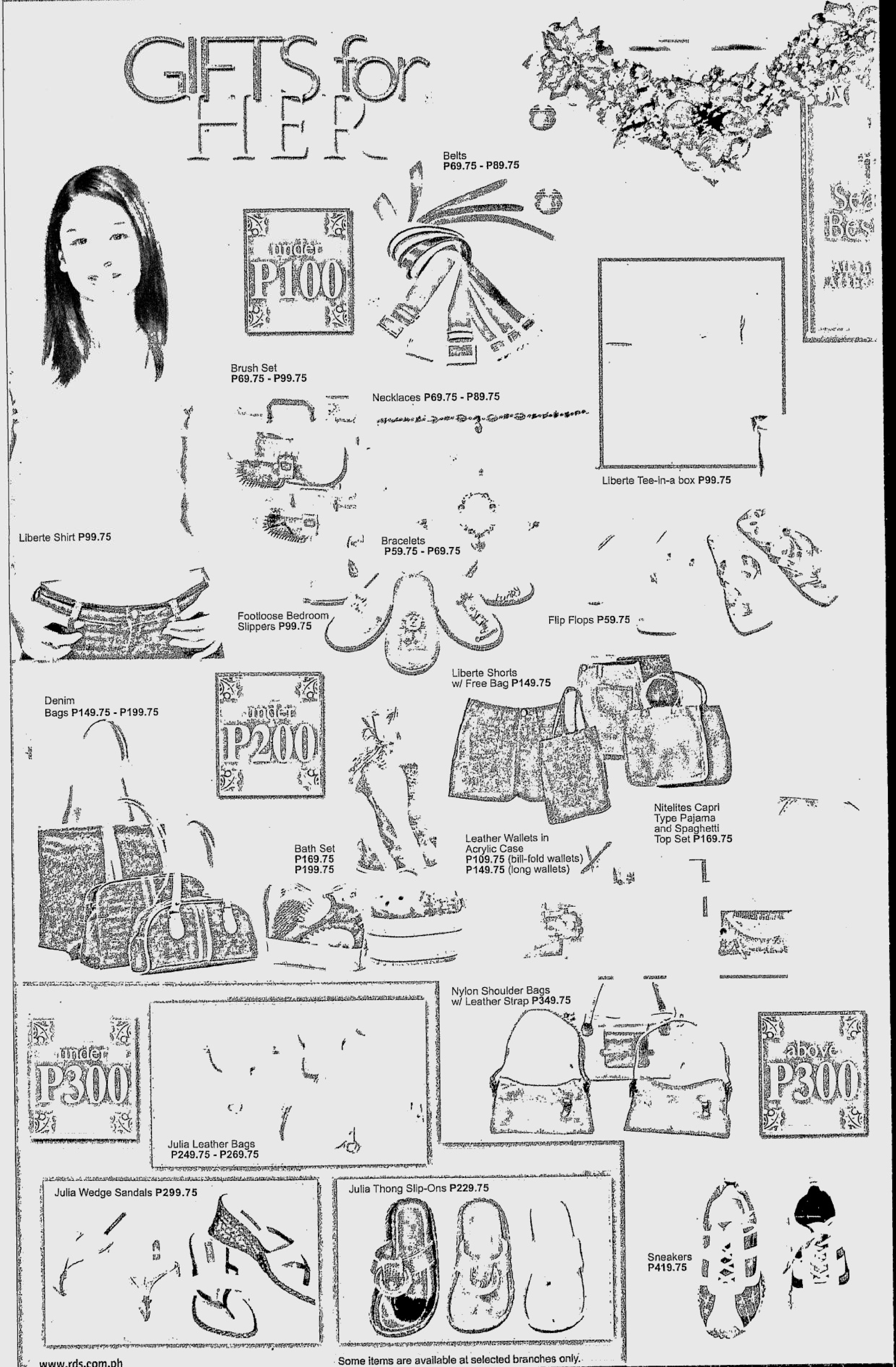

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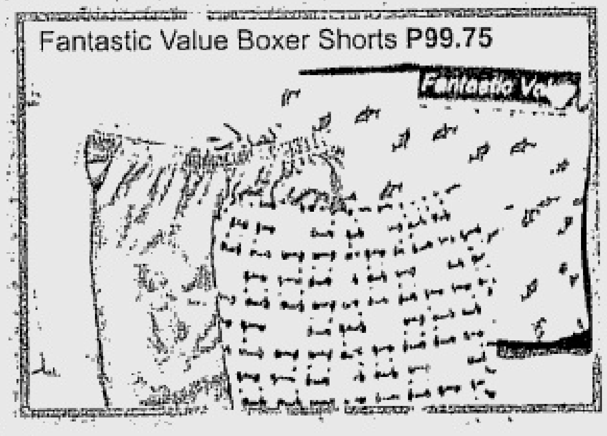
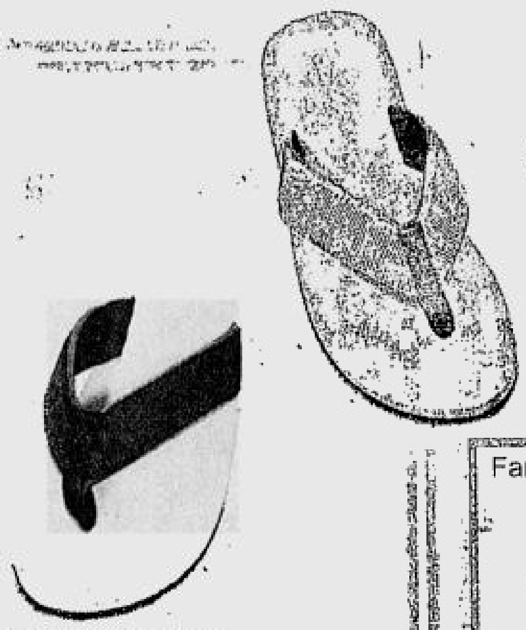


Fantastic Value Boxer Shorts **P99.75**

Fantastic Value
Sock Sets **P79.75**

**under P200**



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PORTSIDE

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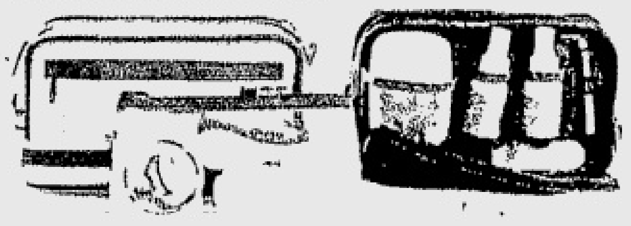

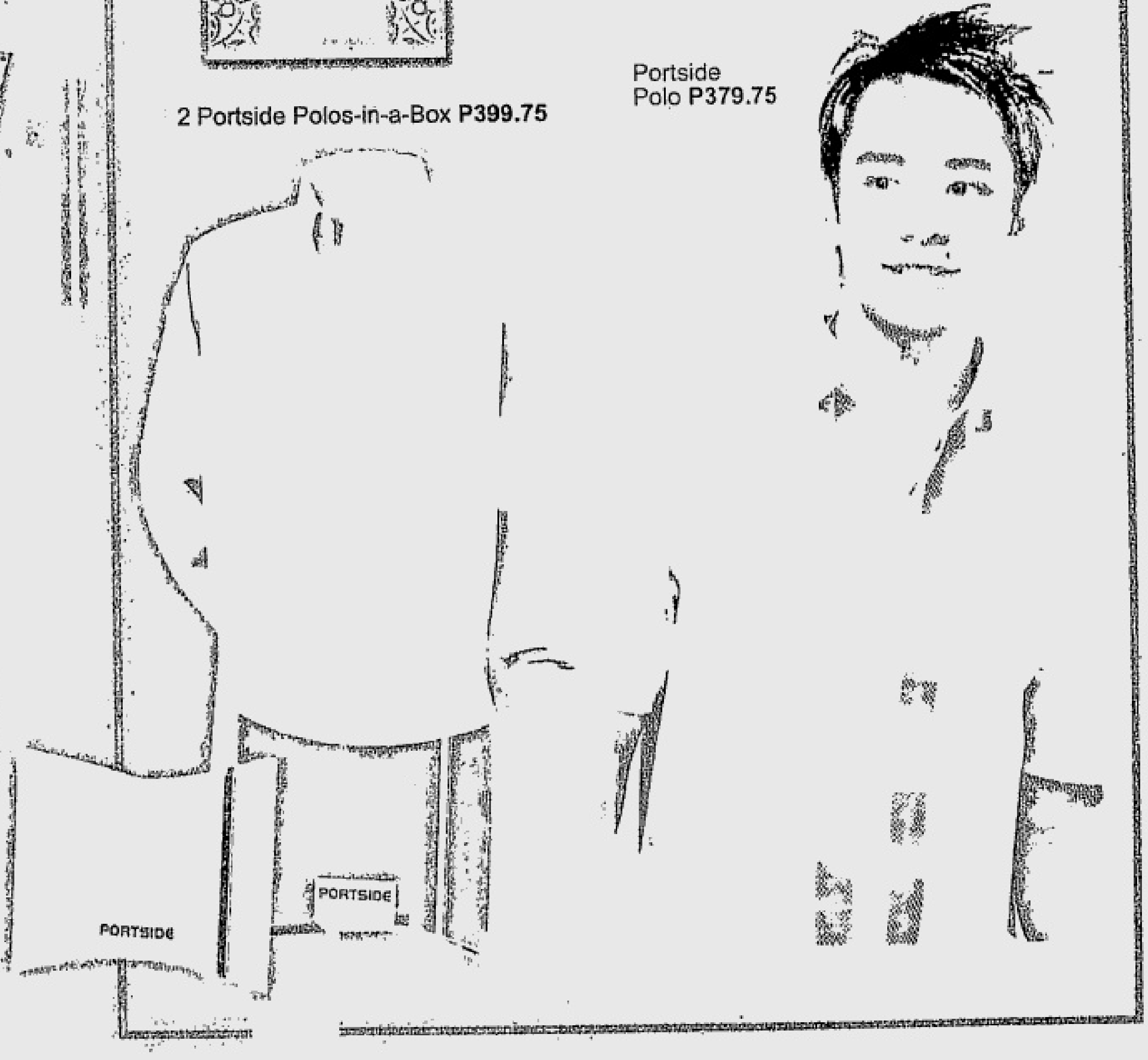

2 Portside Polos-in-a-Box **P399.75**

Portside
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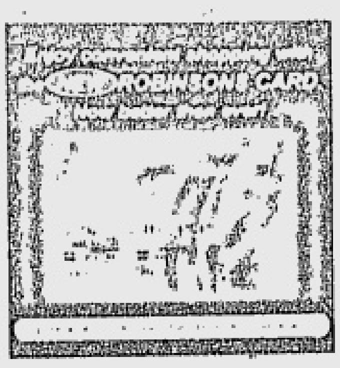

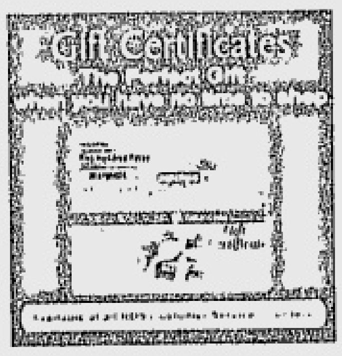

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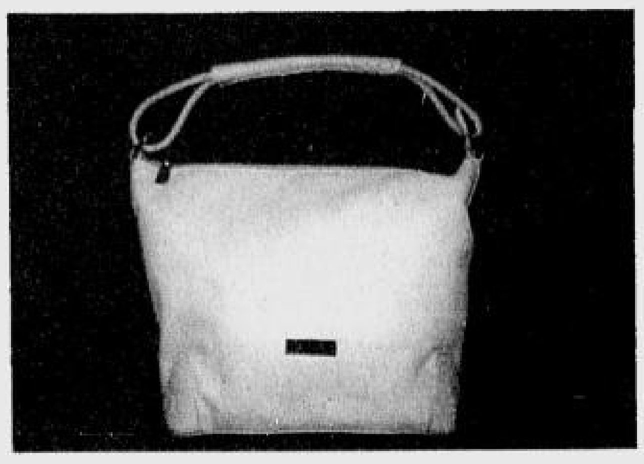

### For the bag hag

SOLID craftsmanship and good-quality leather materials that are wrinkle-free, soil-proof and durable are behind Leonardo bags, be they Chanel-inspired lamb skin handbags, exquisitely designed shoulder bags with real cow leather and elegantly designed tapestry to reversible handbags with beaded and denim sides. All bags shown here are from the Leonardo Kris Aquino holiday collection available at Leonardo outlets at SM Megamall, SM Sta. Mesa, SM Fairview, SM Las Piñas, SM Makati, SM Manduriao, SM Davao, SM Cagayan, SM Pampanga and Gaisano Metro Cebu.

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children's hour
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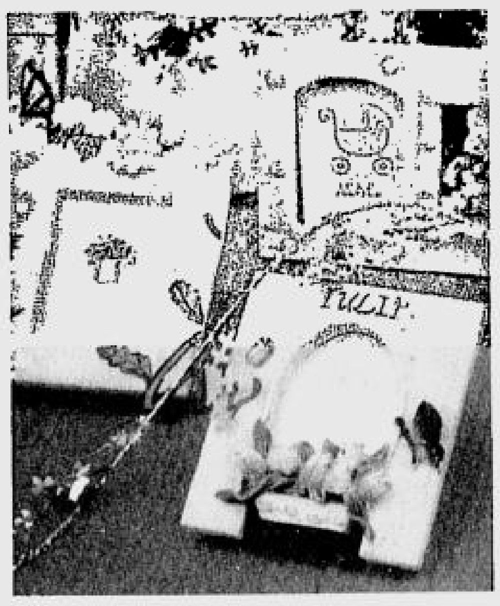
facial cleanser

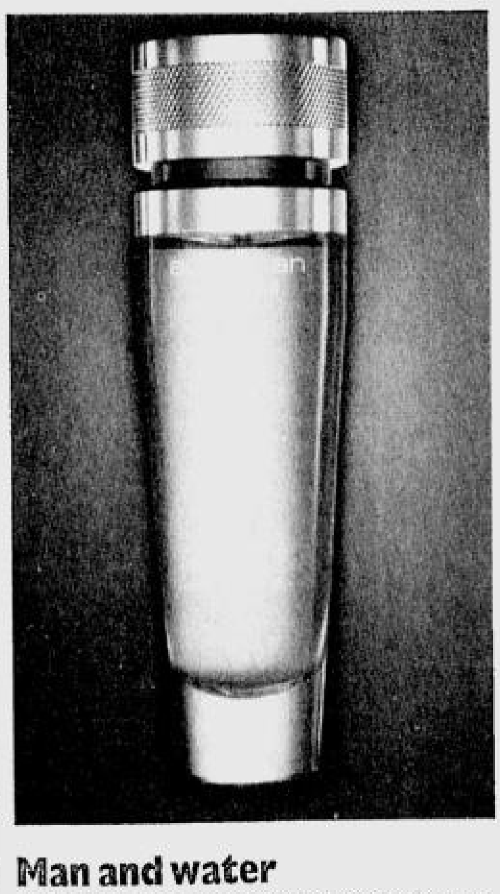
### About face

WHAT girl wouldn't delight in In2it's wide selection of makeup must-haves, from pressed powder (P219.75), nail polish (P99.75) and plummy lip gloss (P269.75) to long-wearing navy-blue eyeliner (P199.75), eyeshadow duos (P179.75), facial cleanser (P179.75) and deep cleansing astringent (P199.75)? Available at Cinderella Ayala Center Makati, SM Megamall and Alabang Town Center.



### Get snappy

PICTURE frames in various sizes with beautiful, decorated borders, from Objects, from P48 to P58. Available at Cinderella.



### Man and water

ROCHAS Fragrances marks the coming of an era reflecting the unique relationship between Man and Water with a fragrance that offers freedom of expression, interpretation and creativity—Aquaman. The bottle is extremely individual in its look and feel, one that is made for the strong, authentic and confident man of today. Its scent is heightened with noble touches of wood and spices, giving a wave of pleasure that only a master perfumer like Rochas can create. Exclusively distributed by Rustan's Marketing Corporation.

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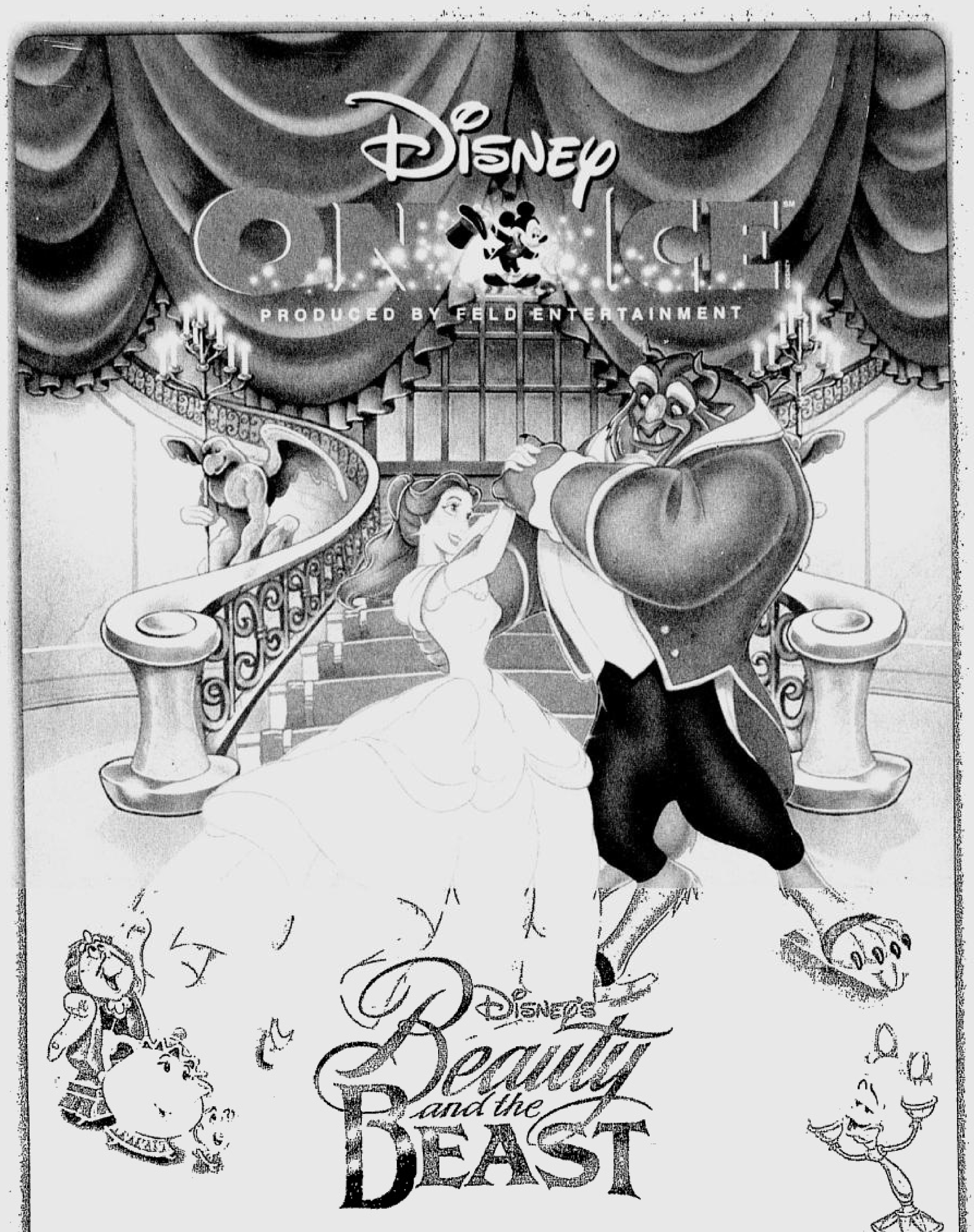
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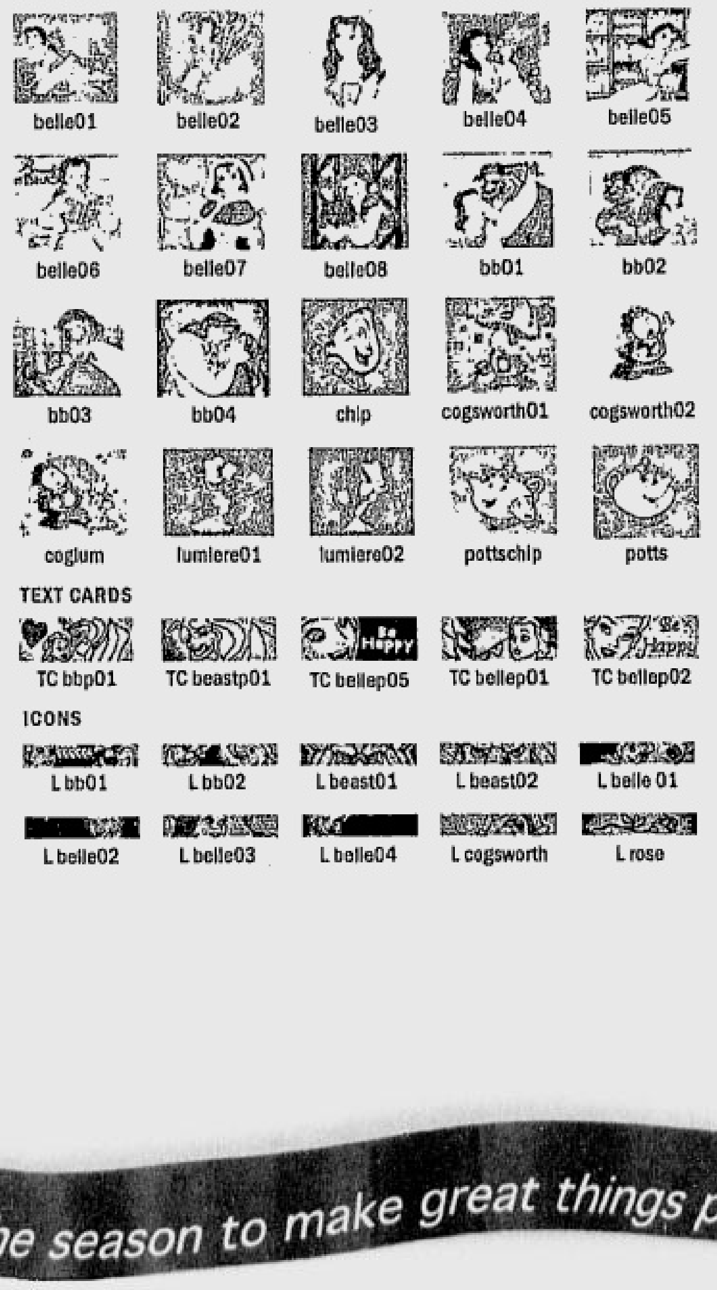
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TONES

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|---|---|
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| Beauty and the Beast | N bb |
| Something There | N something |
| Gaston | N gaston |
| Home | N home |
| As Long as There's Christmas | N long |
| Stories | N stories |
| Listen with Our Hearts | N listen |
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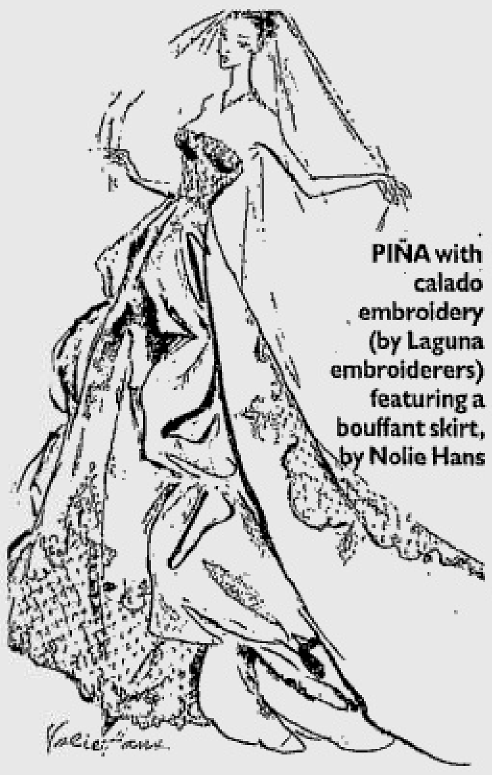


**PIÑA** with calado embroidery (by Laguna embroiderers) featuring a bouffant skirt, by Nolie Hans

# Evolution of RP fashion traced

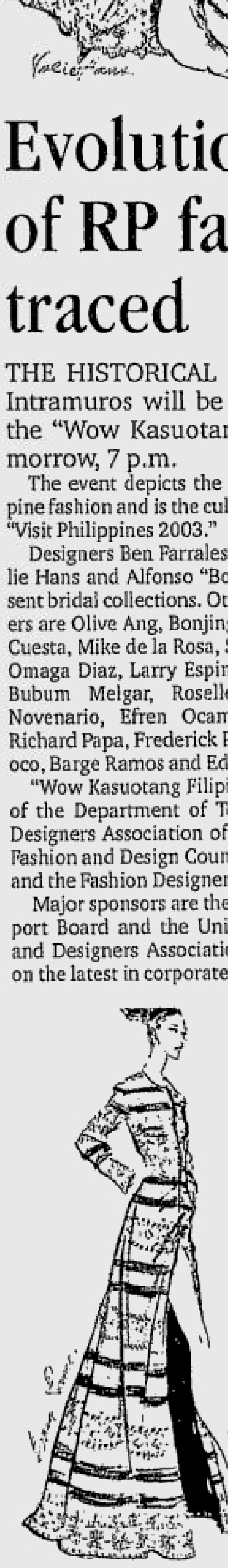
THE HISTORICAL San Ignacio in Intramuros will be the setting for the "Wow Kasuotang Pilipino" tomorrow, 7 p.m.

The event depicts the evolution of Philippine fashion and is the culminating project for "Visit Philippines 2003."

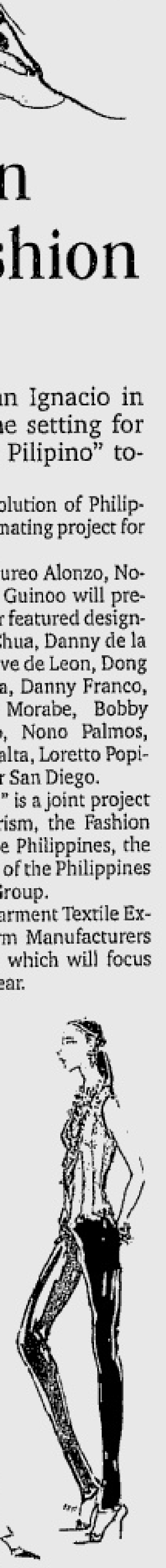
Designers Ben Farrales, Aureo Alonzo, Nolie Hans and Alfonso "Boy" Guinoo will present bridal collections. Other featured designers are Olive Ang, Bonjing Chua, Danny de la Cuesta, Mike de la Rosa, Steve de Leon, Dong Omaga Diaz, Larry Espinosa, Danny Franco, Bubum Melgar, Roseller Morabe, Bobby Novenario, Efren Ocampo, Nono Palmos, Richard Papa, Frederick Peralta, Loretto Popioco, Barge Ramos and Edgar San Diego.

"Wow Kasuotang Filipino" is a joint project of the Department of Tourism, the Fashion Designers Association of the Philippines, the Fashion and Design Council of the Philippines and the Fashion Designers Group.

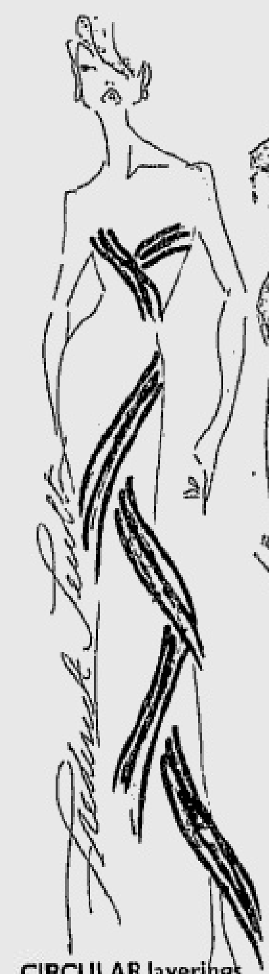
Major sponsors are the Garment Textile Export Board and the Uniform Manufacturers and Designers Association, which will focus on the latest in corporate wear.



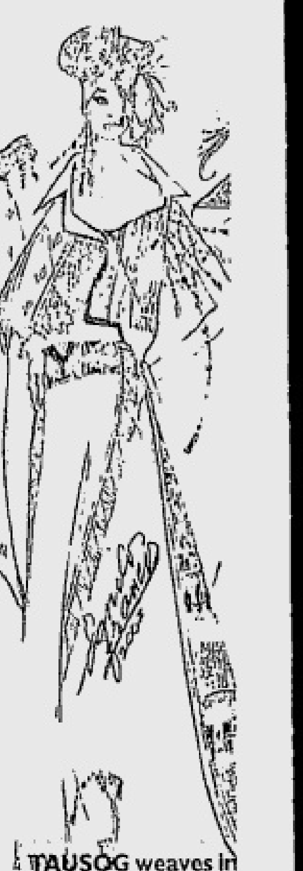
**MINDANAO** dress hand-woven in *vinta* colors—orchid, magenta, fuchsia and gold—becomes glam club wear, by Barge Ramos.



**YAKAN**-woven materials in natural colors are turned into a ready-to-wear day outfit by Mike de la Rosa.



**CIRCULAR** layerings of fine Mindanao silk in black and ecru formal gown, by Frederick Peralta



**TAUSOG** weaves in lime, pomelo, saffron and curry are mixed with linen, cotton and cobwebs of multi-colored beads on billowy tops, caftans and hostess gowns, by Danilo Franco.

# LIFESTYLE

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# Life's rules according to a beaten tennis player

**LIFE-STYLED**

*Thelma Sioson San Juan*

I DIDN'T make last week's deadline for the weird reason that Monday night saw me in the tennis semi-finals way into the night—competing, not watching.

Like FPJ's candidacy, this one was an accident waiting to happen, a self-fulfilling prophecy.

While I've been doing games (including regular embarrassing stints—mine—with the media's Tennistars) with friends, this was my first tournament, a no-choice, really. Fellow members at Palms Country Club talked me into signing up for the meet.

Palms tennis committee head **Joey Reyes** (not the movie director, but Rex Navarrete's bosom

LIFE'S/ E3

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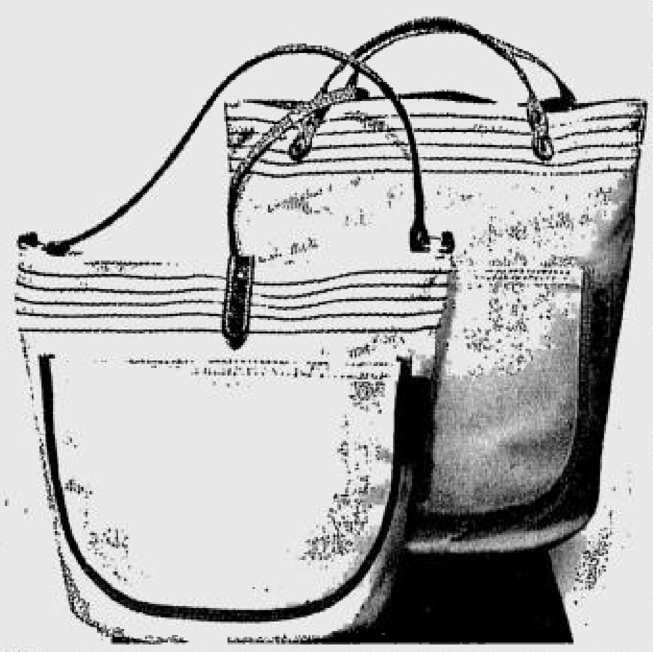

URBAN collection—canvas bags with Desierto Italian flash leather trim

BRIDAL bag made of organza and satin with Swarovski crytals and pearls designed by Kenneth Chua

DESIGNER Inno Sotto, Alfa Filipinas president Jocelyn Ventocilla and fashionista Joyce Oreña-Stadler doing the ribbon-cutting honors at the Filipinas Alfa store opening

# In store: bags galore

Text by Beia Formoso
Photos by Roger Carpio

FINALLY, local fashionistas can get their hands on stylish and classy Alfa bags without having to buy them abroad.

Filipinas Alfa, one of the country's most successful exporters of bags and small leathergoods, recently opened the newest Alfa store at the Fashion Square in Eastwood City, Libis, for the shopping pleasure of local bag freaks.

Designer Inno Sotto and model Joyce Oreña-Stadler did the honors of cutting the ceremonial ribbon. A fashion show of the latest collections by young designers Kenneth Chua and Jill Lema followed.

Designed by Dan Dragon, this latest store presents a new look for Alfa stores all over the metropolis. It has an artisan theme that displays antique accents like an old coal-fired iron, oil lamp and bicycle, and elements inspired by a leather workshop such as a wooden work table and storage crates. Dragon will also re-design Alfa's existing stores in Robinsons Place Ermita, Robinsons Galleria and Festival Mall.

Every Alfa bag is proudly Philippine made, from the designer to the materials to its maker, boasts Filipinas Alfa president Jocelyn A. Ventocilla. Known for its inventiveness in combining leather with different materials such as jute and abaca, Alfa has gone a step further with the discovery of *japapel*, an innovative Japanese pineapple-fiber handmade paper.

The wide range of handbags, shoulder bags and totes come in every shape and size imaginable in designs that are stylish and playful with details like polka-dots, flower appliqués, multi-colored patches and stitching.

Stand-out bags include the army green leather messenger bags, the ribbon-shaped handbag of pink leather with candy colored dots printed on *japapel*, and the bridal bag made of organza, satin, swarovski and pearls designed by Kenneth Chua.

Alfa's new lines come in three different styles: The Classic line presents elegant deluxe leather bags both for office and casual wear. The Urban line targets young professionals on-the-go with chic yet functional bags. The Hype line carries individualistic and fun bags with striking details for fashionistas. Not to be overlooked of course is the Pinay collection of resort bags composed of leather mixed with indigenous materials.

*Alfa is located at Lifestyle Center, Eastwood City, Libis, QC.*

KENNETH Chua, fashion and bag designer

JILL Lema, Alfa's export collection designer

DAN Dragon, interior designer of Alfa's Fashion Square store in Eastwood City, Libis

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**PALMS Country Club First Members' Tennis Tournament winners, from left: Ben Adorable (winner, Men's B), PJ Arañador, Palms general manager Graham Kiy (behind), Marita Buensalido (runner-up, Women's B), Katsumi Fukushima (winner, Women's B), Francis Yan (winner, Men's C), Geoffrey Short (runner-up, Men's C), Joey Reyes (runner-up, Men's B), Bunny Reyes (runner-up, Women's C), Didit Reyes (winner, Women's C).**

# Life's rules according to a beaten . . .

From page E1

buddy from San Francisco, who produced the stand-up comedian's initial shows here) and my coach **Dustin de Torres** sold me on the idea as if it were destiny itself. And when I told Palms general manager **Graham Kiy**, a tennis player himself, that I was "simply scared," and he said, "So are we," I suddenly felt as if the battlefield, indeed, had room for cowards like me.

Like everywhere else, Palms Country Club in Filinvest, Muntinlupa, is badminton country. Badminton crowds out tennis. Not that the two are in the same league, of course.

Anyway, each time there's badminton tournament, the place shakes, with cheering and jeers reverberating from corner to corner of this compact, cozy suburban club that's the "in" place in the south now. (A rare country club that takes its food seriously, so its buffet, Continental and Japanese cuisines, is a regular crowd-drawer.)

In contrast, a tennis tournament, like ours, was, as a *balikbayan* friend observed, "almost solemn," marked more by tension-filled silence than cheering, and even then, the applause would be, for lack of a better word, judicious. Serious duel.

That was the pre-holiday fix I found myself in. Okay, only one game, I told myself; if I survived or lost this one, I could resume my Christmas shopping as if nothing happened—no sweat, no tears.

But, as the gods would have it, I won the game, and the next, lost one, but won another, until, before I knew it, I was in the semi-finals on a Monday, with only an hour rest between matches.

The adrenalin rush over a number of days was more than I bargained for. I was giving a friend-spectator a "heart attack," he said, instead of a vacation.

My son asked, in both disbelief and disgust, "What, Ma! You haven't been eliminated yet!" (He simply didn't like that my game schedule was ruining his car-use schedule.)

As expected, I lost the semi-finals to **Bunny Reyes** (6-8), and by then I was just too happy, if not relieved, to jump off the bandwagon. A tournament—any tournament, I presume—is a learning jolt no textbook could gird you fully for. Don't believe what they tell you—life is a competition, no ifs and buts about it.

My boss gave me a book, "Winning Ugly" by **Brad Gilbert**, the man behind **Andre Agassi** and **Andy Roddick**. It's about the mental warfare that's tennis.

I had time just to scan it, but its heads are eye-openers in themselves—Play Tennis Like You'd Do Business ("I've always found winning a lot more relaxing than losing."); Aggressive Doesn't Mean Hitting Harder; My Motto: D.R.M. (Don't Rush Me); Donate to Charity Not To Your Opponent. And it inspired me to make my own bullet points—life's rules I learned on the run, on the tennis court, as my butt was getting whipped.

Here they are. Consider these my holiday gift to you for those my-ass-is-getting-kicked moments.

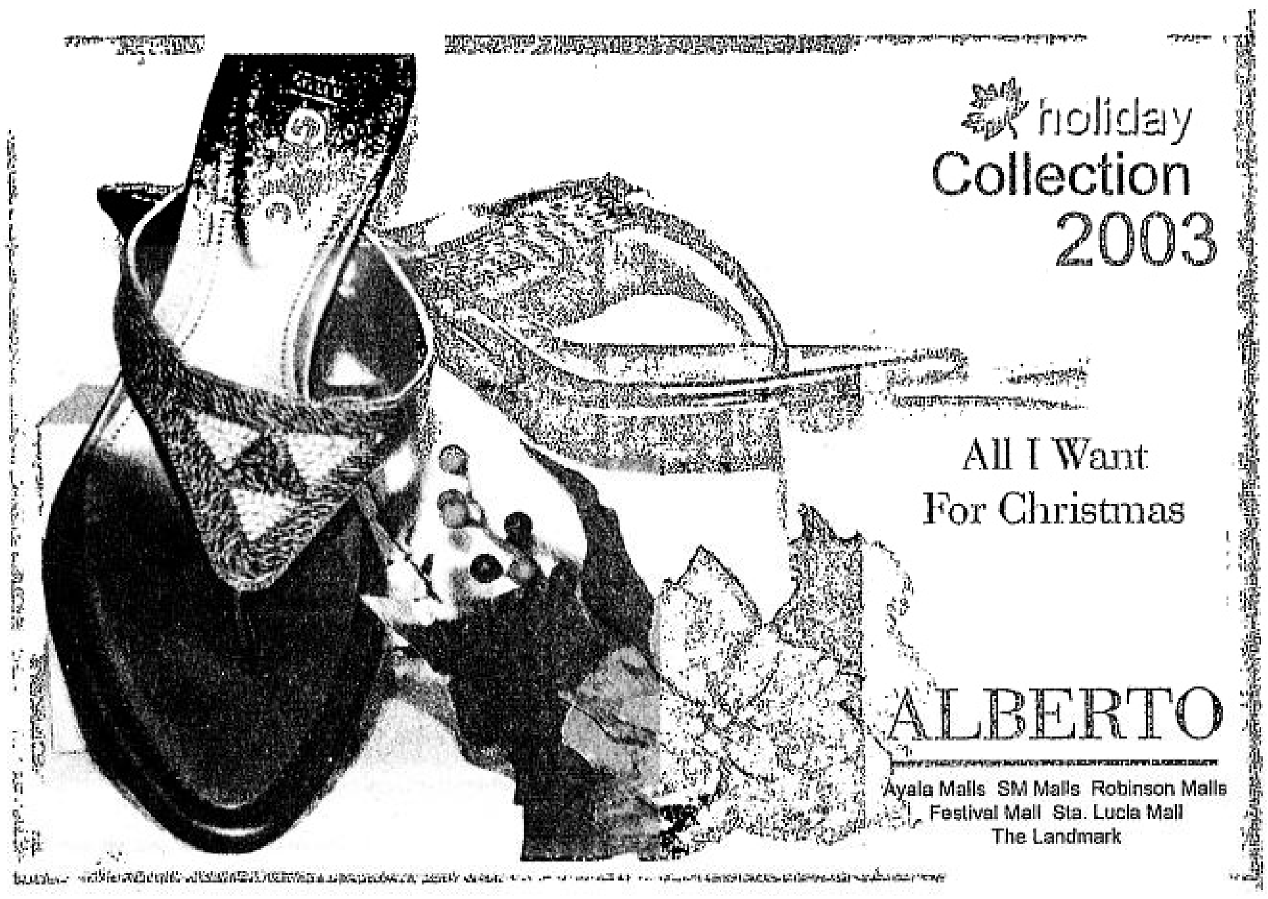
- Want it. Desire it. To get what you want, make sure you want it. My opponent wanted to win—you could see it on her face alone—I wanted to just be over with the game so I could move on to the gourmet dinner.
- The imperfect shots are what will do you in. Some strokes are not trainer-polished—they're awkward, deviate from the correct stance, but they beat you. Those were the ones that threw me off and let my opponent score.

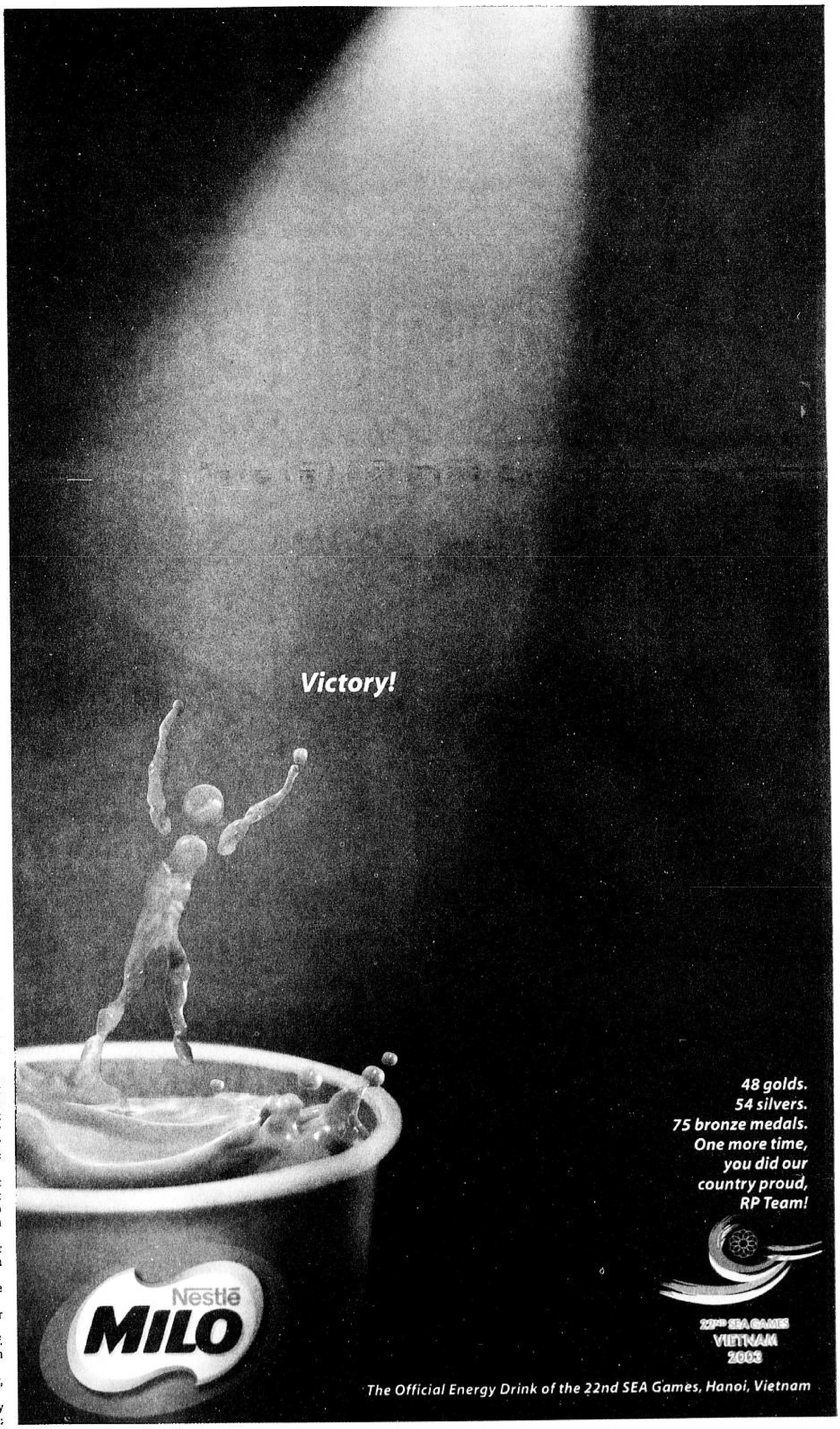
Someone once described **Brad Gilbert**'s strokes: "How in the hell does this guy win? He hits like a caveman who found a tennis racket!" (But he beat the likes of **Boris Becker.**) The same holds true in life—it's the totally imperfect shots that are crucial and pin you to a corner when you least expect it.

- Grab the second. Play each point. No moment to squander. Each is as crucial as the next and the one before it. You're only as good as your last shot. This is what I don't like about the game, my career and, if you don't mind my saying it, life. (I'm the type to marvel at my good shot, pause and, before I know it, it's hurtling back at me.)
- It's just a balance of errors. While you can't be stronger than your opponent, at least don't be weaker either. He or she will push you into making mistakes, and you'll do the same. In life, sometimes, it's just a leveling off of errors.
- Focus. Unclutter your mind. It's hard to hit a winner when your mind is on the column deadline you're missing that very hour.
- Be patient. Stay the course. Hopefully the other guy will blink first.
- Life is one big tangle of nerves. The sooner you accept that, the better.
- You really sweat—even the small stuff. (Denying that you're stressed causes stress in itself.)
- Go for it, girl. If you don't make that shot, let go. Then make each one a fresh start.
- Move on. When I was still analyzing my game days later, my household hollered at me: "Switch it off!" I didn't wait for them to use the remote control on me.

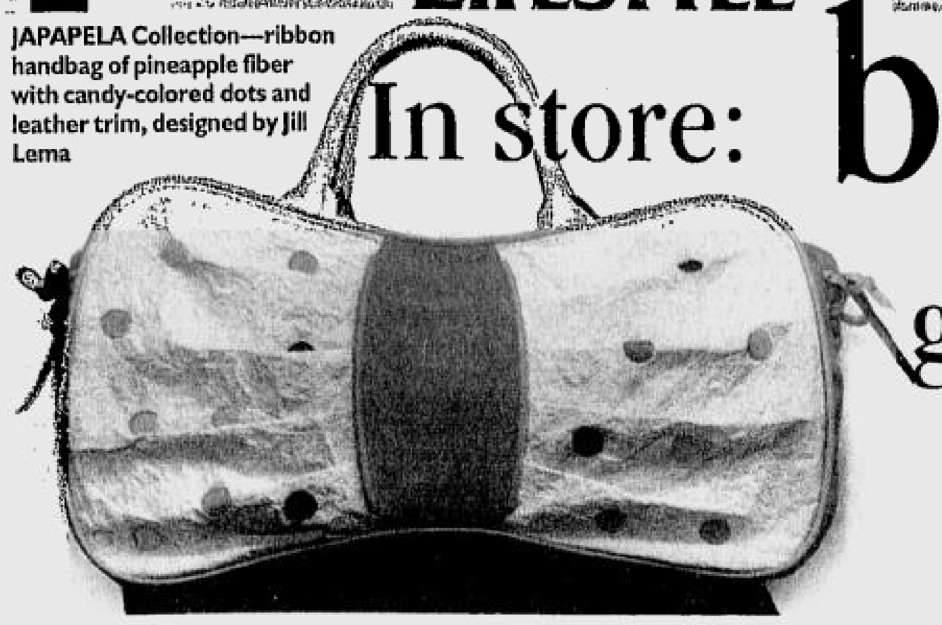
Happy holidays? (Can I talk fashion/style trends next week instead?)

*E-mail the author at tsanjuan@skyinet.net*





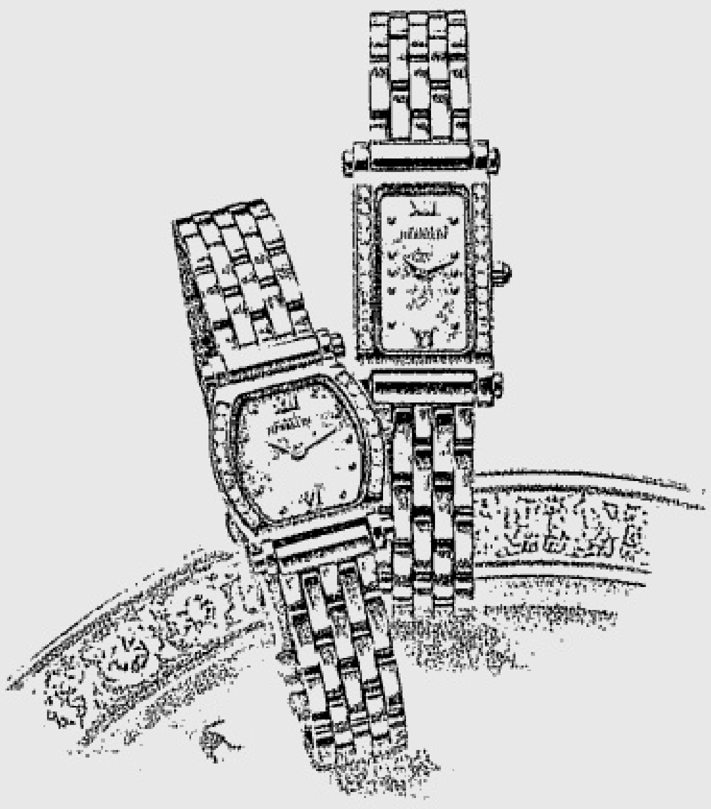
# In store: bags galore



JAPAPELA Collection—ribbon handbag of pineapple fiber with candy-colored dots and leather trim, designed by Jill Lema

There's something else you can do with pineapple and Alfa, bagmaker to the world, has discovered it

STORY ON PAGE E2



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# Home LifeStyle

**THE MAIN** living room with the eight-foot tall Christmas tree Korina herself assembled

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# House of a new spirit

## Where her old condo unit brimmed with colors and patterns, Korina Sanchez's new home basks in serene off-white

**Text by Alex Y. Vergara**
**Photos by Chito Vecina and George Tapan**

KORINA Sanchez has probably never been more at peace with the world and with herself than she is today.

The feisty broadcaster's new state of being is best seen in her new home, an off-white, two-story affair with a lush front garden that teems with the colors of flowers and sounds of chirping birds in one of Makati's exclusive villages.

Sanchez was drawn to the house, which harks back to the 1960s, by such vintage touches as dark and parquet wooden floors and jalousie windows, not to mention the location.

She has several reasons to live in Makati instead of Quezon City, where ABS-CBN is located. Her belief in feng shui is one of them.

"I don't live by it," she explains, "but my good friend, astrologer Paloma Garcia, and a number of geomancers had advised me to get a house in the southwest facing the northeast."

### Personal evolution

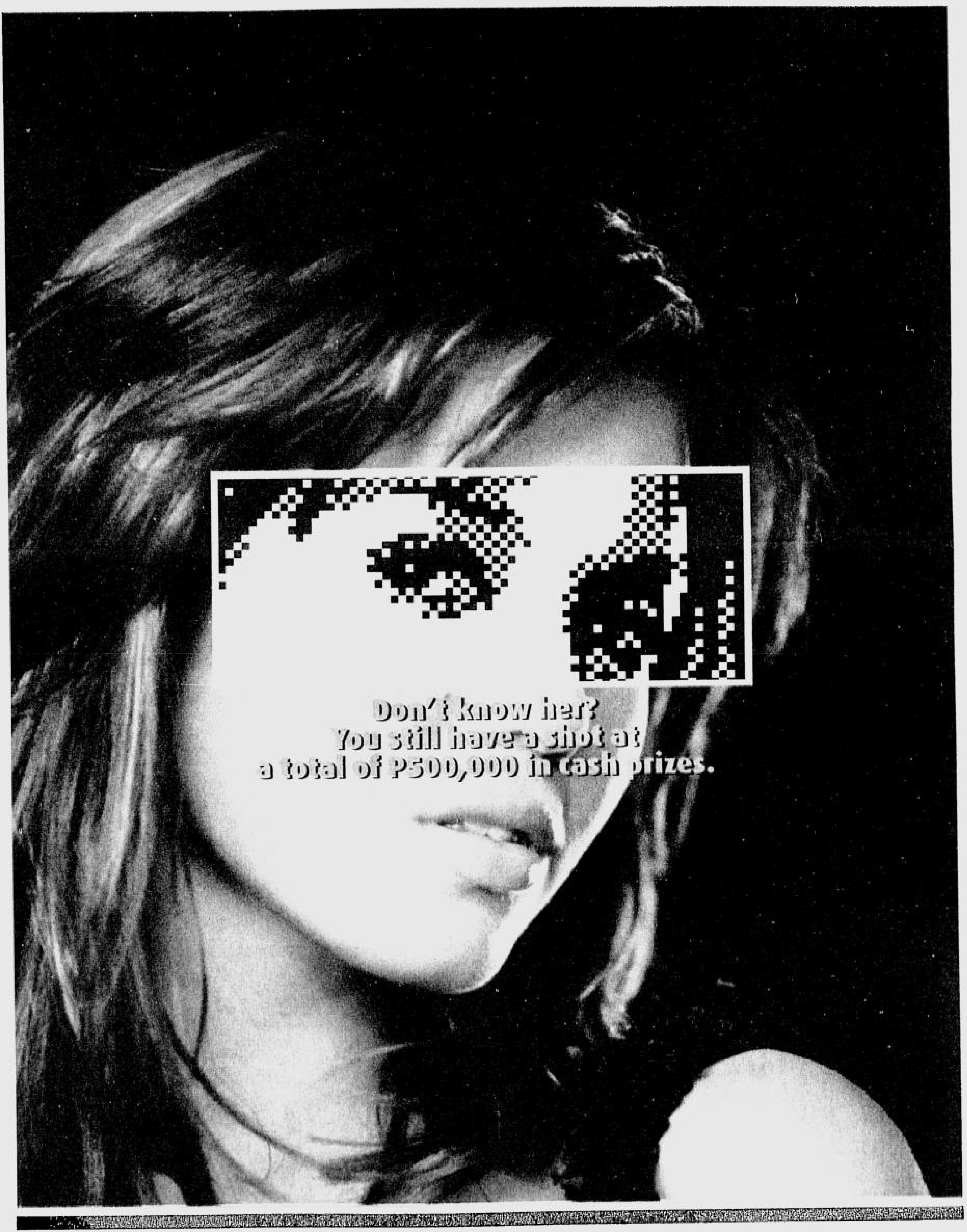
Since she had nothing to lose, she says, she followed the advice. And so far, she has little reason to regret it. If not for the Edsa traffic, her Makati home has provided her with an ideal sanctuary from the day's cares. She can now garden by the moonlight, a therapy she could hardly indulge in when was living in a high-rise condo.

"My former unit was probably the only one with too many real plants inside," she says with a chuckle. "Before I moved into this place, I had the condo unit and another one in Pasig rented out."

Not a few friends and family members no-

HOUSE/ F2

**READING** corner



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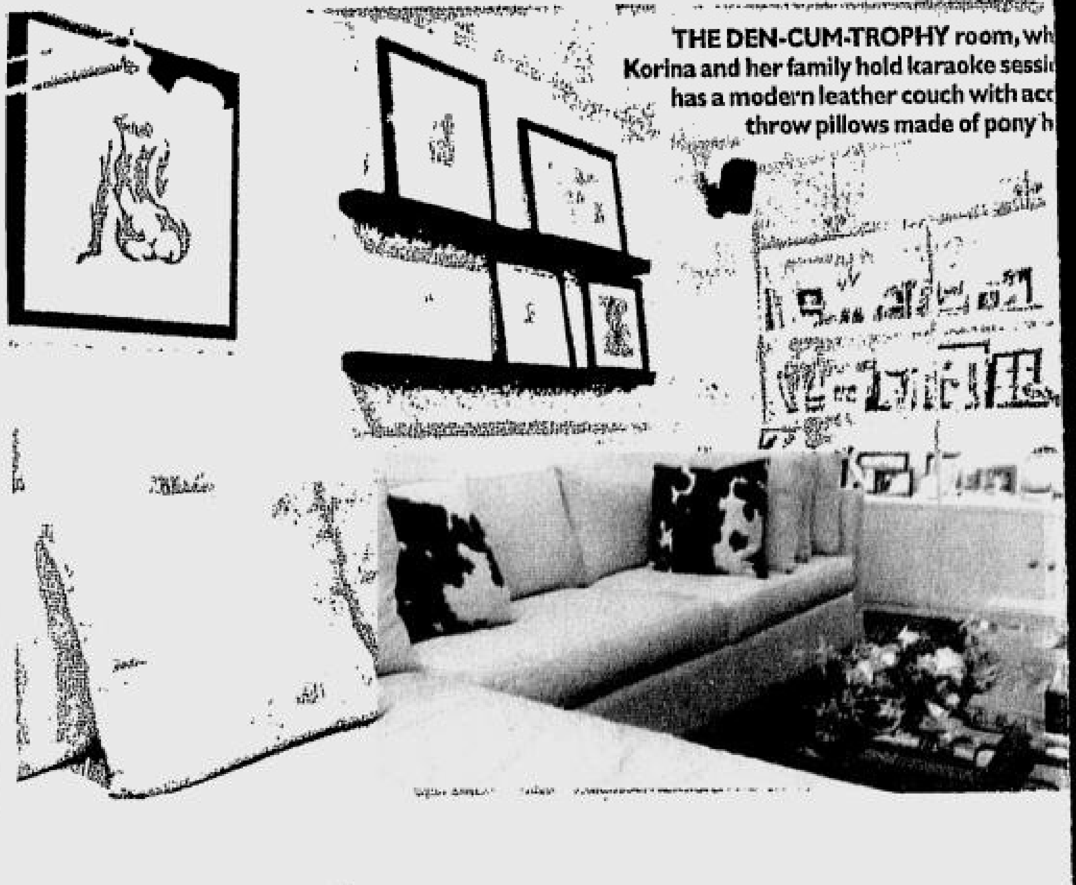
**EAST** meets West in the covered lanai with such elements as chairs made of seagrass, artworks by Amorsolo and Malang, and a San Francisco-style bay window.



**THE DEN-CUM-TROPHY** room, wh
Korina and her family hold karaoke sessi
has a modern leather couch with acc
throw pillows made of pony h

# House of a new spirit

**FORMER** President Cory Aquino's gift to Korina, an oil painting of a woman surrounded by flowers

From page F1

tice how different the two places are. In a way, says Sanchez, the development marks her personal evolution.

Where her condo unit was brimming with colors and patterns—from the intricate accent pieces to the bright red and orange walls—her new home is devoid of vivid hues.

"I just wanted a more serene surrounding," she reasons. "And everybody who visits me here says the place is so me."

Other than the walls, an all-white finish with hardly visible matte and glossy stripes by interior designer Tito Villanueva, Sanchez selected the pieces that eventually went into her house.

A living room—one of two, actually—by the bay window is the closest thing there is to a covered lanai. Thus, she chose Indonesian-made furniture pieces made of sea grass with upholstered cushions to go with the area.

"I find this area an ideal place to read, while I listen to the sounds of chirping birds outside," she says. "I'm hardly at home during weekdays, but I make it a point to stay at home on Sundays. I sleep, read and indulge in my beauty rituals."

Despite the change in address, Korina has managed to remain fond of collecting antique furniture pieces from China and artworks by Filipino artists.

Small accent chairs, console tables and a cabinet with a pair of Chanxi doors from such leading dealers as Silk Road, Old Asia, Pietro Collection and Tomlinson contrast with bigger, modern pieces such as a pair of padded white sofas in the main living room.

At the risk of sounding like a braggart, Sanchez says she derives satisfaction not from reproductions but from the real thing. The same attitude extends to her appreciation of art pieces, which she collects, and the signature items she occasionally wears.

Among her prized possessions are paintings by such masters as Amorsolo, Luna, Legaspi and Joya. She's also a proud owner of works by Onib Olmedo, Gus Albor, Malang and H.R. Ocampo.

A gift from former President Cory Aquino, an oil painting featuring a woman surrounded by flowers, is prominently featured in a sitting area near the window.

## Labor of love

Speaking of flowers, Sanchez does her own floral arrangements fashioned from faux and real blooms such as roses and gerberas sold at Dangwa. She even finds the time to volunteer to do the Christmas trees of artistically challenged friends for free.

And not only does she do it for free, she often finds herself spending her own money to buy additional decorations for her friends' Yuletide display!

"I buy the flowers myself," she says. "Of course, I know how to haggle. Besides, I already have a number of *suki* at Dangwa."

Her latest labor of love is the Christmas tree people see on the set of her television show "Morning Girls." Unable to stand the old one, a hodgepodge of buntings that she says was far from cohesive and "telegenic," she literally took matters into her own hands by redoing the tree with the help of several housemaids and the show's staff.

Indeed, had she not ended up as a broadcaster, Sanchez, without batting an eyelash, says she would have become an interior designer like her mom Celia. Having been born and partly raised in Hong Kong, where her parents used to work, she was exposed early on to the beauty of antique and contemporary Chinese furniture.

"Most of what I know today I learned from my mom," she says. "But unlike her, my taste is a bit more subdued and less traditional. My house isn't Chinese per se, but a mélange of Asian influences from China, the Philippines and Bali."

Her home is all set for the holidays although she will be spending Christmas with her parents and siblings at the family's old home in Merville.

Sanchez, however, plans to host pre- and post-Christmas dinner parties for such close friends as Sen. Loren Legarda, Kris Aquino, Boy Abunda, Ricco and Tina Ocampo, Dyan Castillejo-Garcia and Carol Sy.

She usually divides guests into groups of eight, as her glass-topped square table by Designs Ligna can only accommodate that many.

"I'm often invited to their places for dinner," she says. "It's now my turn to return their hospitality."

Sanchez also holds a yearly garage sale of some of her clothes and shoes during the Christmas season. The *ukay-ukay* is open to all her relatives, and features slightly used items provided by her shows' sponsors.

In keeping with the season, she sells them at giveaway prices. One can't certainly go wrong with a blouse or shirt worth P5.

"It's almost Christmas, but I have yet to schedule the *ukay-ukay*," she says. "I've deferred the event and our staff Christmas party in deference to my father, who recently suffered a second heart attack."

Korina and members of her family are praying that dad Ramon, the central figure in past Christmas celebrations and whose vital signs are improving, will soon snap out of his "stupor."

Certainly, Korina Sanchez is not wanting in friends both old and new who are praying for her dear dad's quick recovery.

*E-mail the author at avergara@inquirer.com.ph*

**THIS** buffet table features three of Korina's blue-and-white plates from Old Cathay. Tito Villanueva worked on the wall behind the table to evenly bring out its color and natural grains.

**IDENTICAL** chairs from 17th-century China

**CHINESE**-inspired Christmas up close

**KORINA'S** inner sanctum where she hibernates every Sunday—sleeping, reading, watching DVDs or indulging in her favorite beauty rituals

**SEEING GREEN.** Korina's
walls, soft duvet and fresh

**THE HIGH-PROFILE TV** h
chirping African lovebirds.
forget-me-nots, pink pitim

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**ON** top of morning girl Korina Sanchez's Christmas wish list is a quick recovery for ailing dad Ramon, good health for herself, and informed and enlightened voters come May 2004.

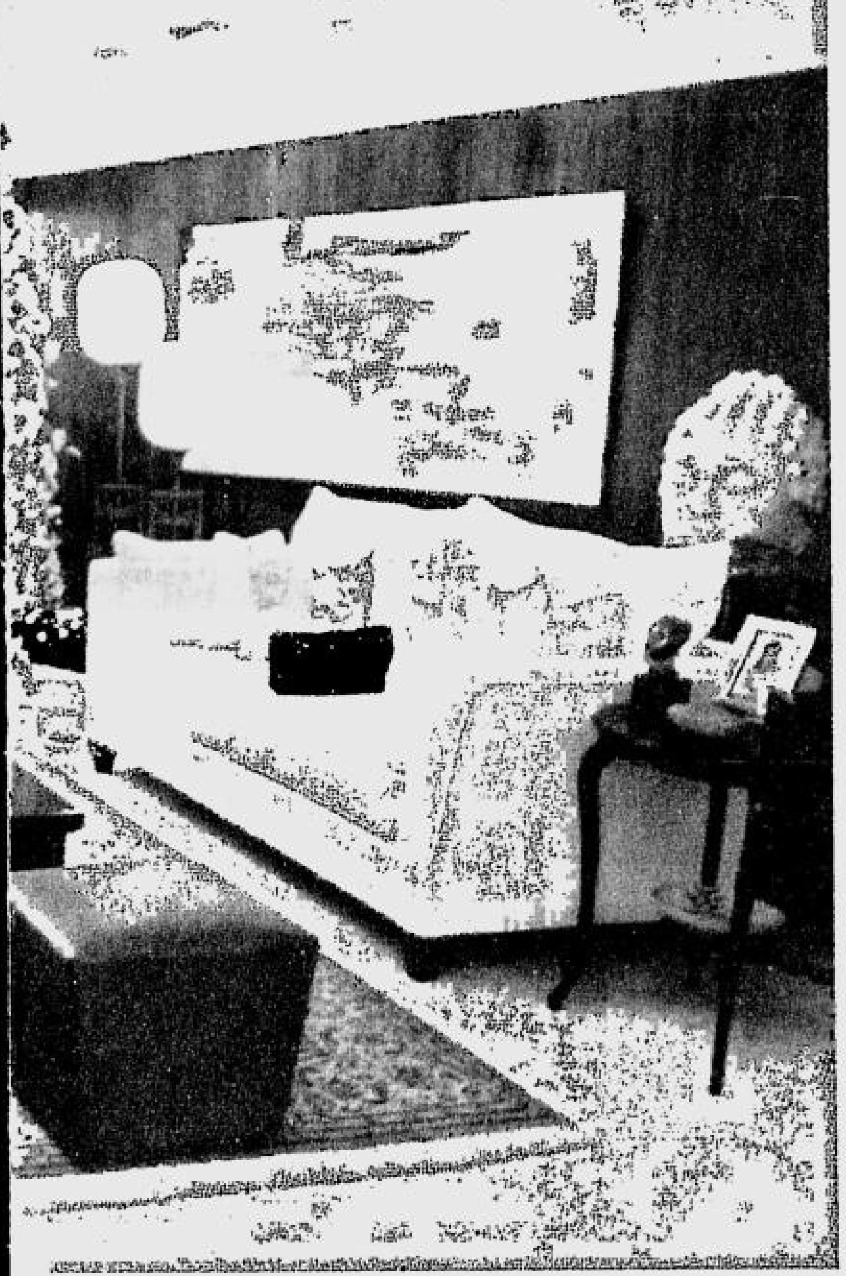
**FAUX** and real elements in a single arrangement

**DINNER** for eight on the owner's glass-topped square table

**THE LANDING** by the staircase has a South Asian flavor

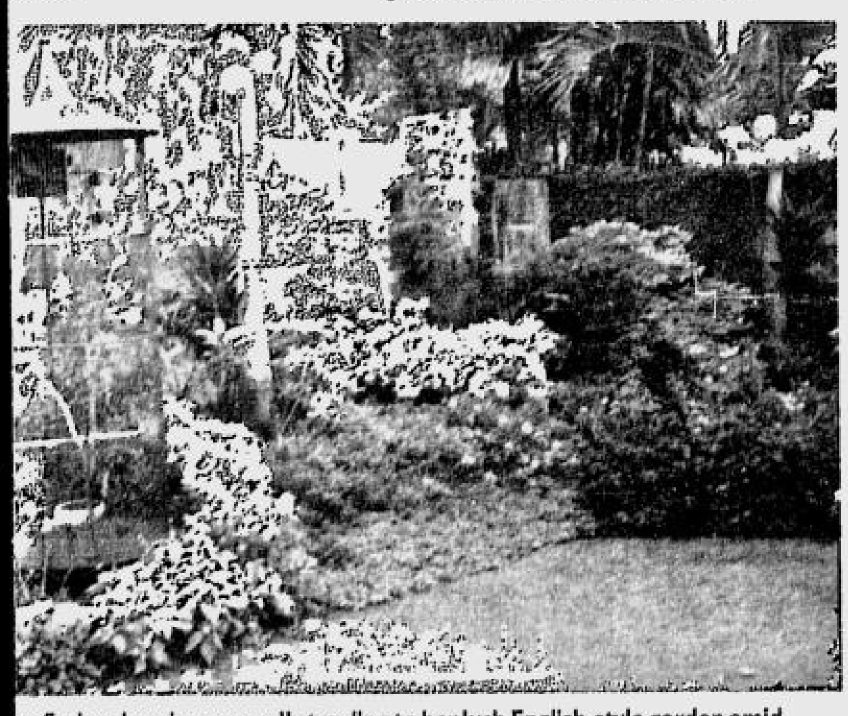
**ALL** dressed up for the holidays, with gifts in small boxes tied in red ribbons

**ANOTHER** shot of the living room, with Gus Albor's oil painting and a giant alabaster head of the Buddha as focal points



uestroom, with sage green owers

**KEPT** underneath the Happy Buddha is good friend Kris Aquino's wish list.



st finds solace in personally tending to her lush English-style garden amid The rainbow of colors comes from yellow irises, fuchsia bromeliads, purple nis and white roses, among others.

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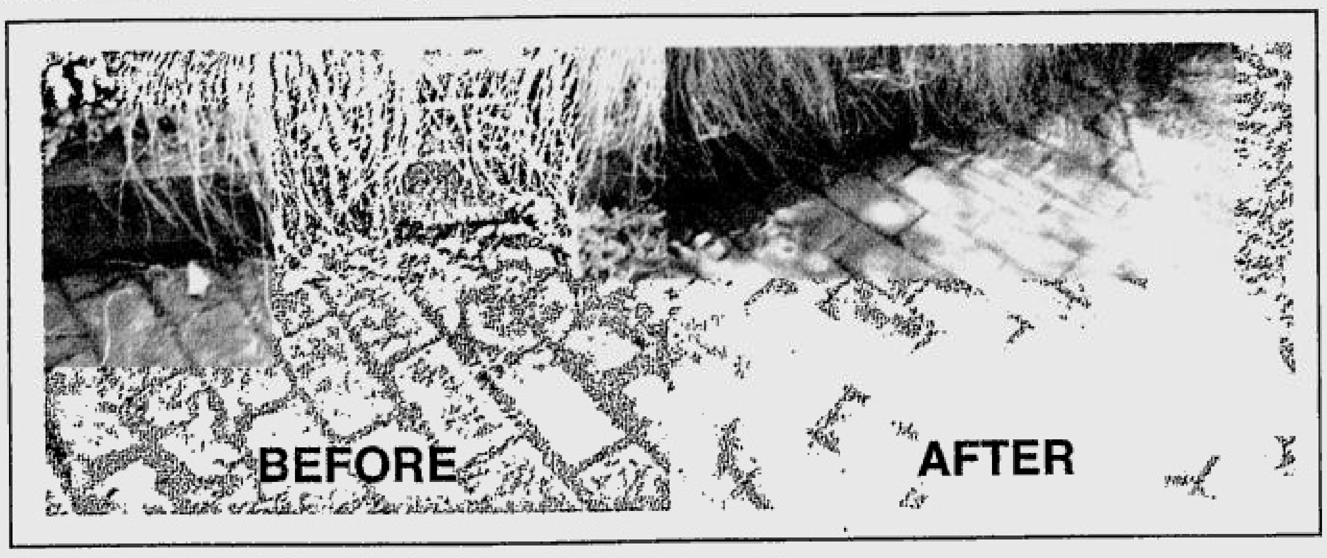

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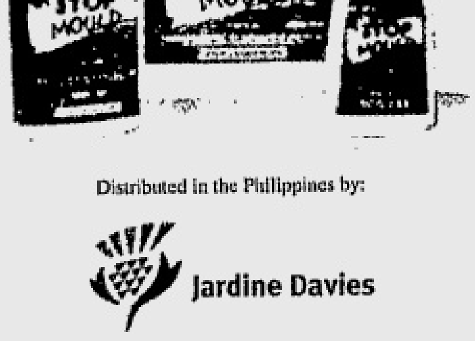

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# A house is moved, heritage is conserved

**SEEING GREEN**

*Doris Gaskell Nuyda*

THE CAUSE of "built heritage" or heritage conservation will likely get a big push with the new coffee-table book, "Tahanan: A House Reborn," by Reynaldo G. Alejandro and Vicente Roman S. Santos.

The book is the story of a family's love affair with their ancestral home. Specifically, it is the story of the patriarch, Roman R. Santos who, with his first wife Juliana Andres, their seven children, as well as the eight others by a second union, saw to it that the house was more than a shelter—it was part of their lives.

How they tried to preserve it all these years, moving it piece by piece to a new location to save it from ruin, is a case study in heritage conservation on the family level. However, because the house was the setting for several historical events, it could also be considered for historical conservation.

When Roman married Juliana in 1899, he opted to live in Navotas, Juliana's hometown, even if he was from Pampanga. Navotas was near the sea, and Roman needed sea air for his health.

He was starting various business ventures at the time. It took the couple 18 years to complete the house, in 1917. It was grand—three stories high—and became a landmark in the town. The topmost floor, called the *torre*, was surrounded by a balcony and thus, enjoyed the open air. The children, when young, loved to play and run around in it.

## Coping with highs and lows

Business may have had ups and downs through the years but, due to Roman's thrift and laid-back nature, he coped with the problems and was soon a successful, multifaceted businessman with interests in banking, agriculture, insurance, real estate and others.

When he died in 1959, his estate was valued at almost P4 million, a very substantial amount in those days. His house, in all its entirety, was bequeathed to Alicia, his youngest daughter.

The Santos couple's taste was evident all over the house, which also reflected the times. Alicia retained as much of those features as possible. The floors, the walls, doors and furnishings, predominantly of wood, were cared for and polished through the years, giving them a beautiful sheen, captured by excellent photos in the book.

Designs of the interiors and furniture, as well as the architecture itself, reflect the '20s and '30s, but are reminiscent in some ways of the *bahay na bato* of the Spanish era, except that now, straight-back chairs have splats in the American Adams style.

In some areas in the roomy house, carvings and turnings in Spanish-era furniture provide an eclectic mix. Elements of Art Nouveau are evident as well. Other bits of memorabilia were retrieved from *bauls* and long storage when the house was moved to Antipolo.

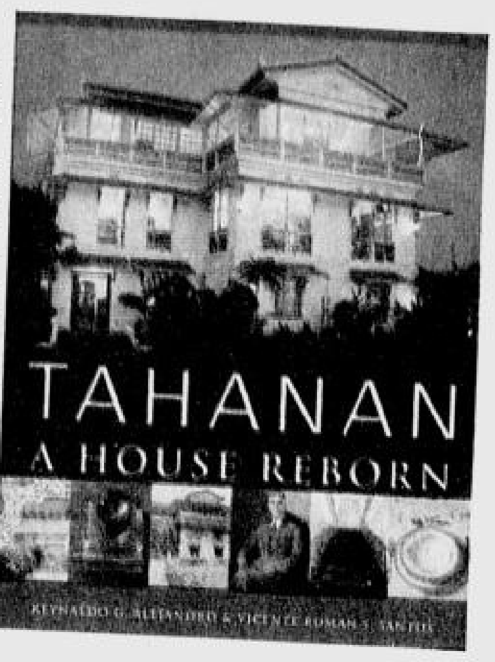
Photographs of Juliana and the other Santos women have been restored for posterity.

## House 'reinserted'

The authors refer to the upscale *bayanihan* spirit of a family "remounted" and "reinserted." The aim of moving the house was not to remodel or reconstruct it, but simply to set it exactly as it was in a different location.

There had to be some reconstruction, however. The number of steps in the main stairs were raised from three to four, since three was considered bad luck. Portions of the house that were badly damaged or in disrepair when dismantled prior to moving, had to be removed and changed.

Damage was actually the primary reason the house had to be moved. Water seepage, termite infestation, unsteady posts and old electrical installations had taken their toll on the house after eight decades. When it was being put together again in Antipolo, some rooms had to make way for other needs.



Apart from these, the house is exactly the same, especially from the outside.

What the family did to their beloved old house probably would be instructive for similar conservation problems. The Santos family had three options: one, transplant the house to a new location; two, declare it obsolete and keep it as a memento or put it to some other use; and three, demolish it and retain only parts to use as vignettes in a totally new house. As we know, they chose the first.

Dismantling the old house was a big production. It took about two years and 20 cargo trucks to bring the materials from Navotas to Antipolo. Hilly Antipolo was chosen because there would be no problems of water seepage as in Navotas. Besides, the breezy, forest-like surroundings seemed to fit in well with the house.

## New generation carries on

Alicia instilled a love for the house in her children, the fourth generation. By 2001, when the transfer was completed, they were ready to take over. Alicia had died by then.

Members of this generation now live there, and they have the responsibility to complete their mother's task. She wanted what her father and mother wanted—to keep the house, preserve and enjoy it for generations to come.

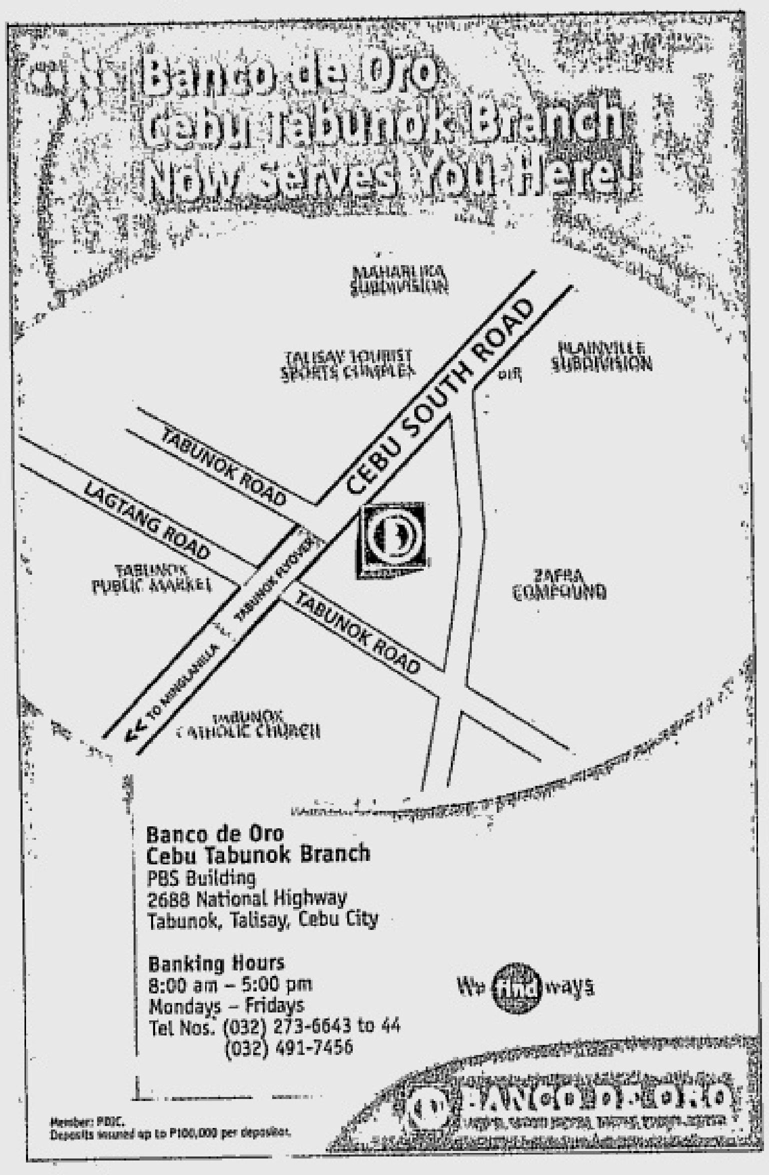
Some families like to record their genealogy in books by tracing their family tree. While significant to these families, others could not relate to them.

In "Tahanan," we can relate to the rise, decline and rise again of a house that figured in the lives of its residents for eight decades. Grand events happened and notables visited the house, now parts of its history, adding to its value as a living marker of a bygone era.

The book may be about one family and their house, but it could well be the story of conservation and preservation of any building that has meaning for us as a people. Those who tend to tear down the old because the new seems more attractive, have a lot of rethinking to do. As wise men have said, we are what our past has made us. Let's give some value to ourselves by remembering who we were, by retaining the treasures of our past.

*Printing is by Duende Publications of Malabon City.*

*E-mail the author at dorisnuyda@yahoo.com*



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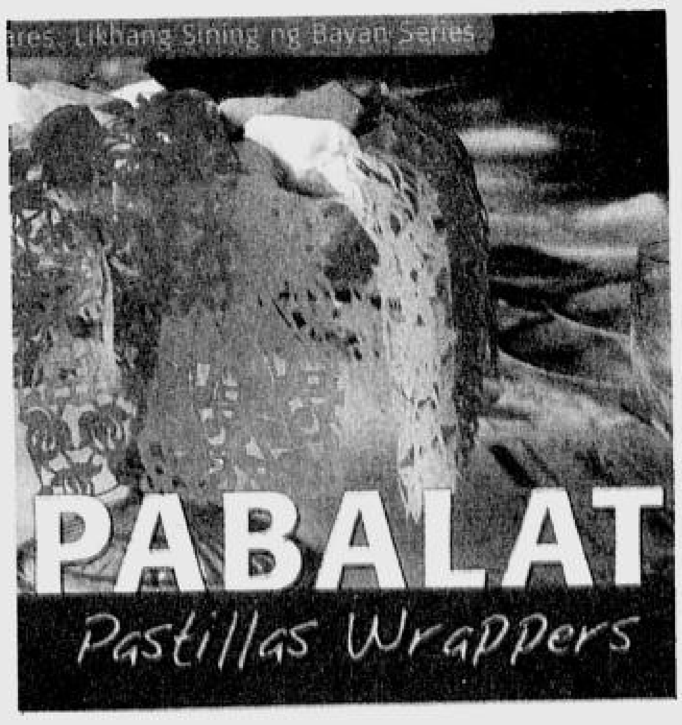
"Parol: Christmas Star Lantern" traces the history, development and popularity of the *parol* from the *pignatta* of Renaissance Italy to today's kaleidoscopic Philippine Christmas lantern.

The second volume of the same series is "Pabalat: Pastillas Wrappers," which traces the history and development of the dying art, *pabalat*, from Chinese paper cuts, *papel picado* of Mexico to the well-known San Miguel, Bulacan, tradition of wrapping sweets.

Published by Duende Publishing, both booklets were written by New York-based writer Reynaldo Gamboa Alejandro and Vicente Roman S. Santos, antiquarian and gentleman farmer.



# Plant and garden store opens tomorrow

SM City North Edsa, which underwent a major facelift recently, will open The Garden, Saturday, Dec. 20.

Located at the front of the small, The Garden occupies 3,000 sq m of space with winding pathways and a special drive-through access.

Fourteen plant growers and garden supply providers share the space, with each parcel averaging 220 sq m.

Commercial exhibitors include Beauty Blossoms, Blooms Avenue, E & R Orchidlandia, Flower Box, Genesis Flowers, Harbest Agribusiness, King Louis Flowers & Plants, Purificacion Orchids and Ornamentals, Ramgo International, R&R Plants and Planters, Robles Heritage, and VS Orchids.

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REYNALDO G. ALEJANDRO & VICENTE ROMAN S. SANTOS
PAROL
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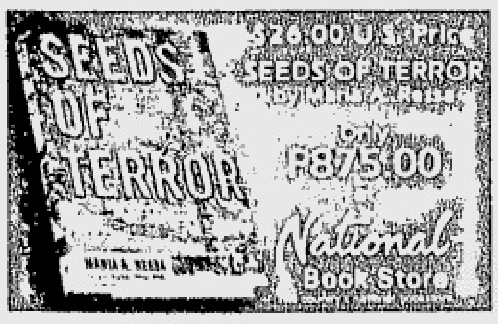
Likhang Sining ng Bayan Series
PABALAT
Pastillas Wrappers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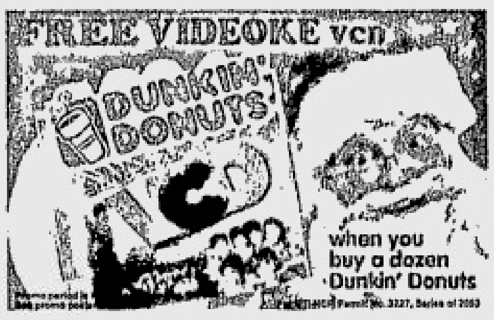
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# Oranges and spices for the holidays

MAKEOVER 911

*Kinny Salas*

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Here are gift ideas that incorporate these two elemental scents:

**L'Occitane L'Oranger line.** The hands-down winner for prettiest gift is the Pomander (P1,750), a pewter metal shaped like orange slices which, when opened, releases the spicy orange scent.

The solid perfume is sold separately for P700, while the candle (P895) is so fragrant that a mere minute of its being lit is enough to spread the scent throughout the house.

The fragrance ingredients used are orange leaves, essential oils and EDT, which has a sweet citrusy scent suitable for both men and women.

ORANGES/ G4

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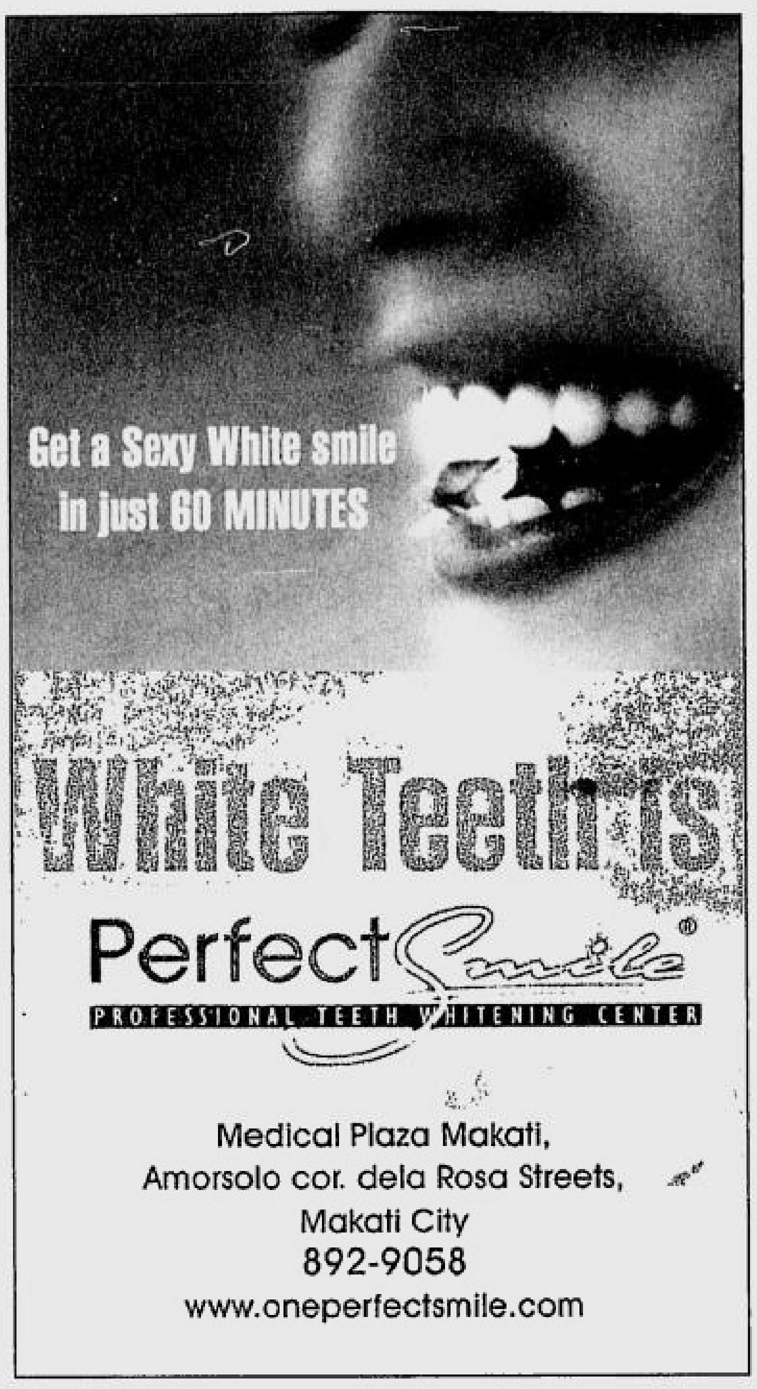
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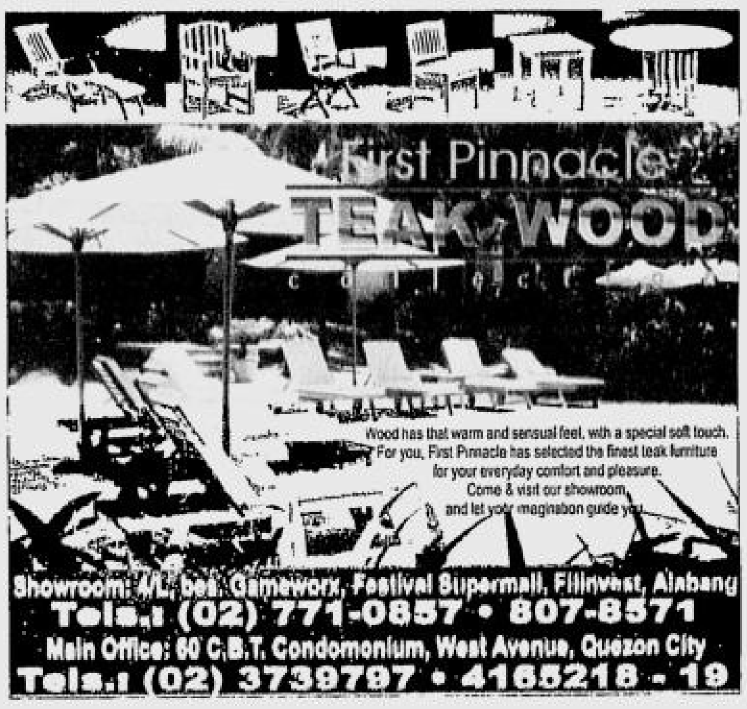
Robinsons Galleria
ROBINSONS Galleria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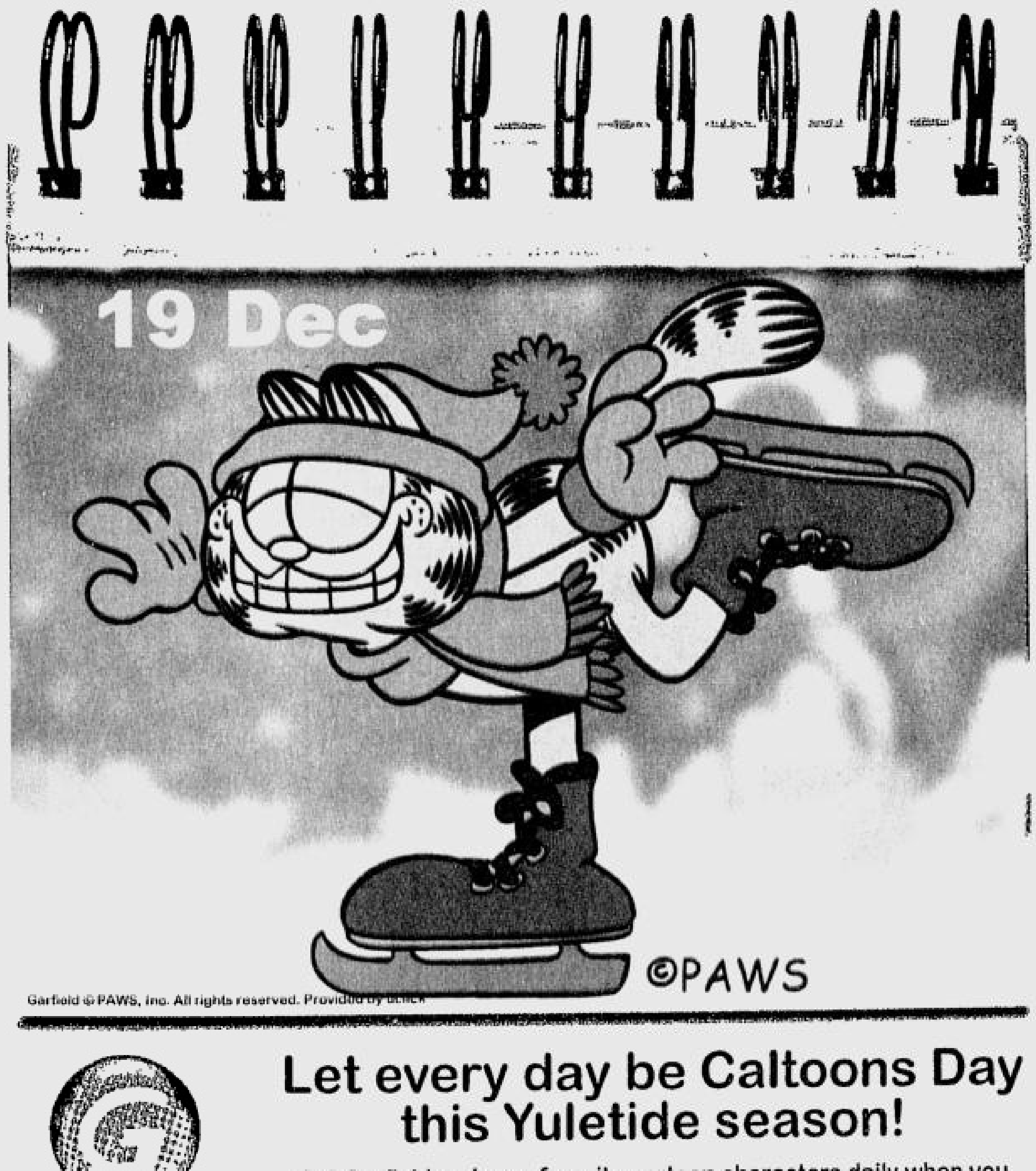

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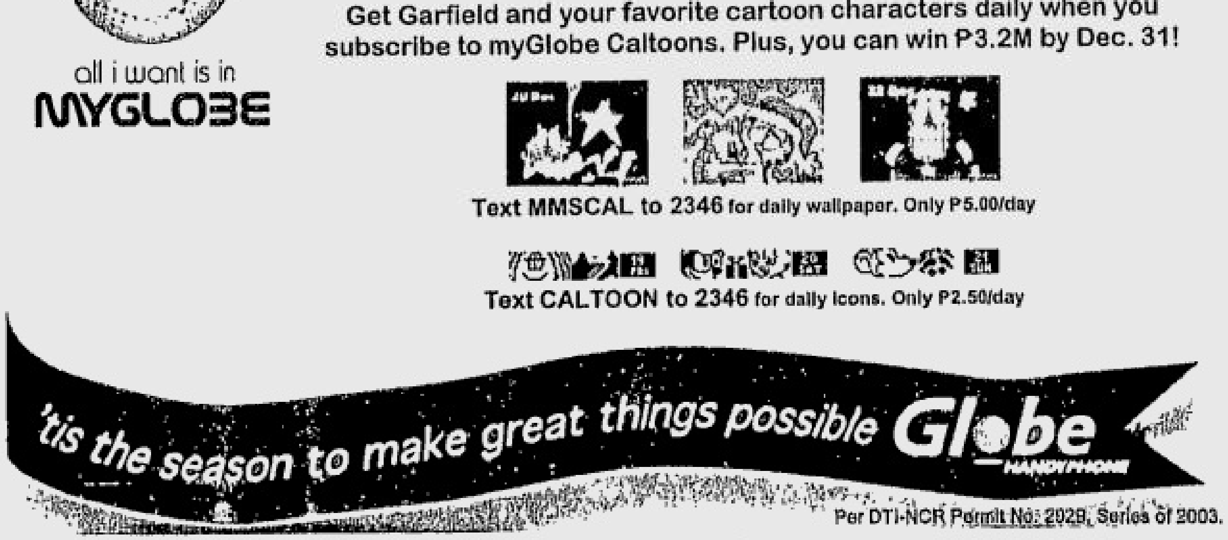
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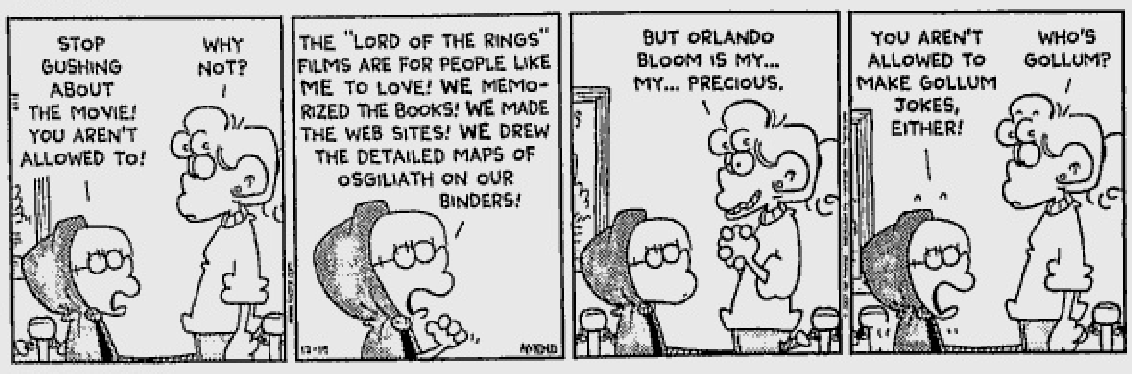
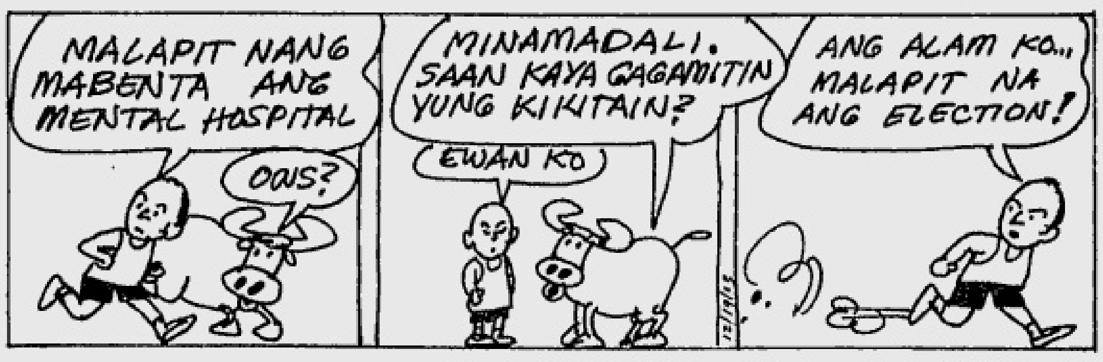
## FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


STOP GUSHING ABOUT THE MOVIE! YOU AREN'T ALLOWED TO!
WHY NOT?
THE "LORD OF THE RINGS" FILMS ARE FOR PEOPLE LIKE ME TO LOVE! WE MEMORIZED THE BOOKS! WE MADE THE WEB SITES! WE DREW THE DETAILED MAPS OF OSGILIATH ON OUR BINDERS!
12-19
AMEND
BUT ORLANDO BLOOM IS MY... MY... PRECIOUS.
YOU AREN'T ALLOWED TO MAKE GOLLUM JOKES, EITHER!
WHO'S GOLLUM?

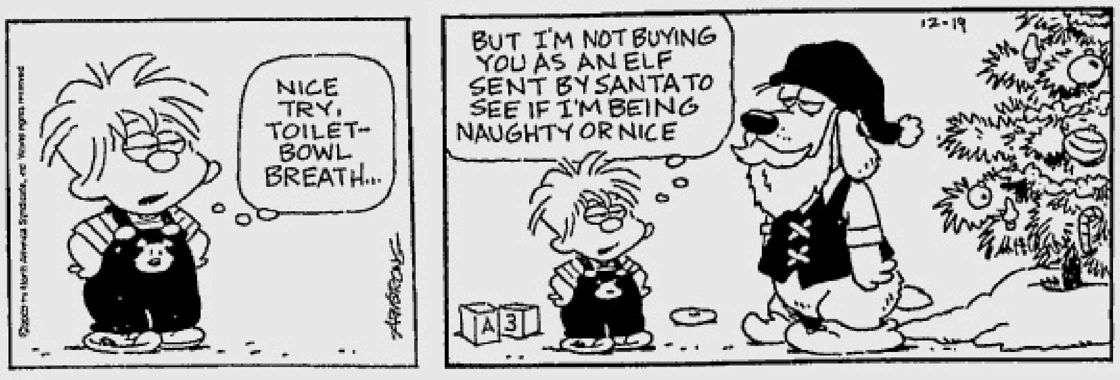
## A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


MALAPIT NANG MABENTA ANG MENTAL HOSPITAL
OWS?
MINAMADALI. SAAN KAYA GAGAMITIN YUNG KIKITAIN?
EWAN KO
ANG ALAM KO.. MALAPIT NA ANG ELECTION!

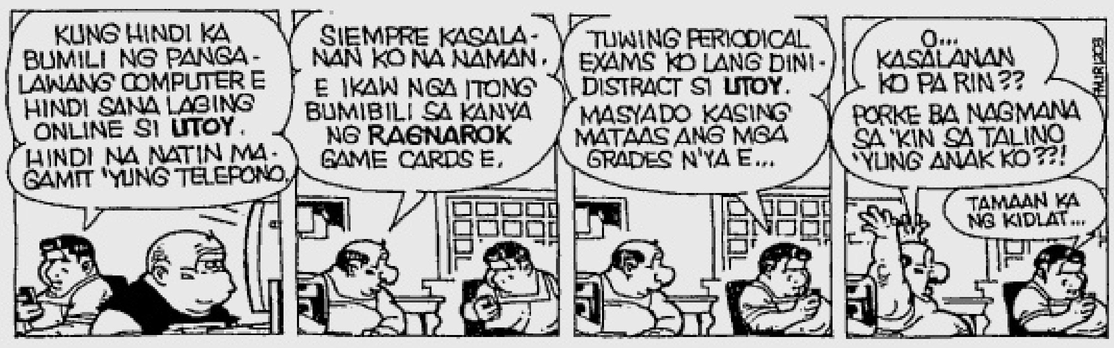
## MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


NICE TRY, TOILET-BOWL BREATH...
ARMSTRONG
12-19
BUT I'M NOT BUYING YOU AS AN ELF SENT BY SANTA TO SEE IF I'M BEING NAUGHTY OR NICE
A 3

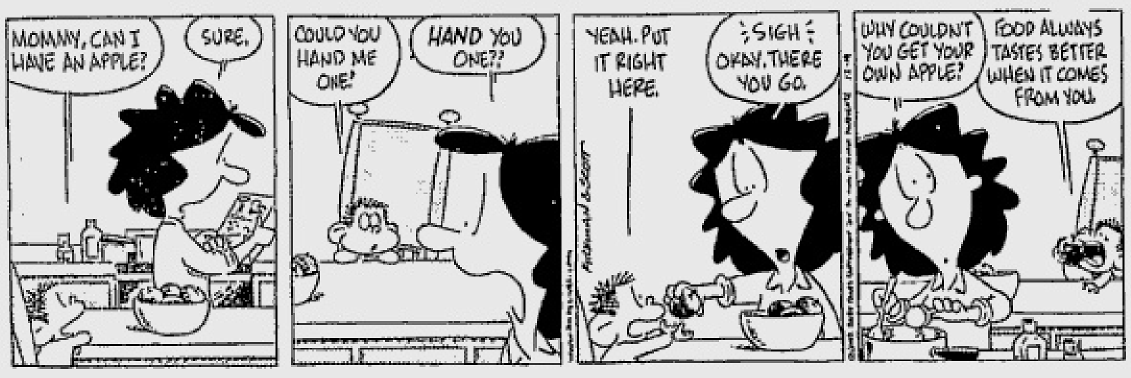
## PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


KUNG HINDI KA BUMILI NG PANGALAWANG COMPUTER E HINDI SANA LAGING ONLINE SI UTOY.
HINDI NA NATIN MAGAMIT 'YUNG TELEPONO.
SIEMPRE KASALANAN KO NA NAMAN. E IKAW NGA ITONG BUMIBILI SA KANYA NG RAGNAROK GAME CARDS E.
TUWING PERIODICAL EXAMS KO LANG DINIDISTRACT SI UTOY.
MASYADO KASING MATAAS ANG MGA GRADES N'YA E...
O... KASALANAN KO PA RIN??
PORKE BA NAGMANA SA 'KIN SA TALINO 'YUNG ANAK KO??!
TAMAAN KA NG KIDLAT...

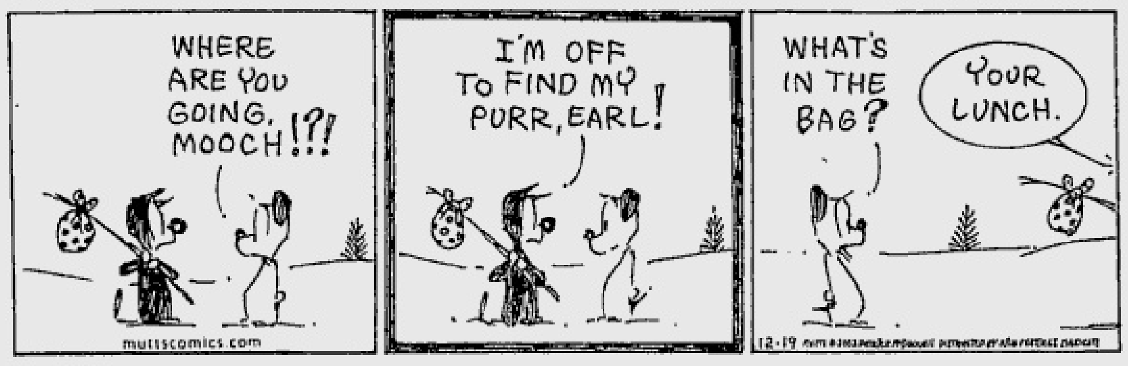
## BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


MOMMY, CAN I HAVE AN APPLE?
SURE.
COULD YOU HAND ME ONE!
HAND YOU ONE??
YEAH. PUT IT RIGHT HERE.
SIGH OKAY. THERE YOU GO.
WHY COULDN'T YOU GET YOUR OWN APPLE?
FOOD ALWAYS TASTES BETTER WHEN IT COMES FROM YOU.

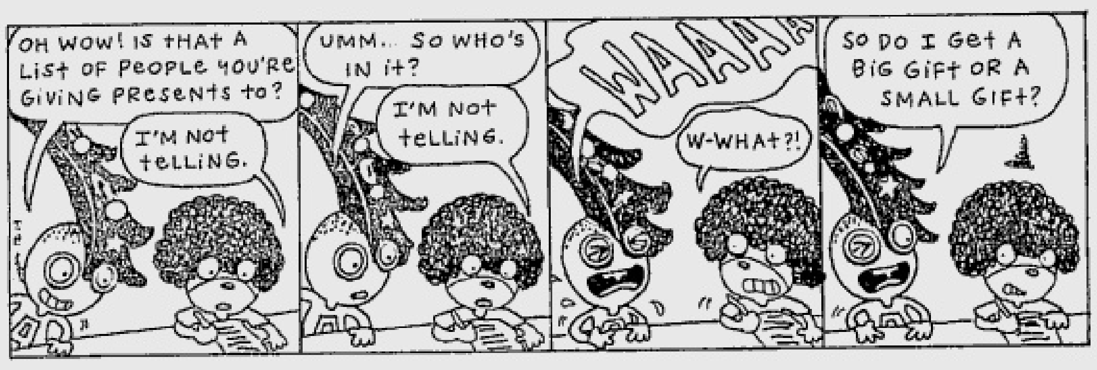
## MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


WHERE ARE YOU GOING, MOOCH!?!
mutts comics.com
I'M OFF TO FIND MY PURR, EARL!
WHAT'S IN THE BAG?
YOUR LUNCH.
12-19

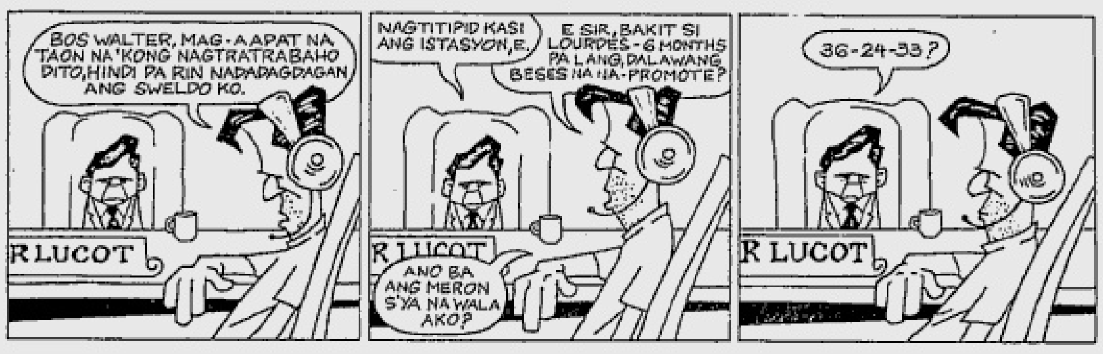
## ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


OH WOW! IS THAT A LIST OF PEOPLE YOU'RE GIVING PRESENTS TO?
I'M NOT TELLING.
UMM.. SO WHO'S IN IT?
I'M NOT TELLING.
WAAAA
W-WHAT?!
SO DO I GET A BIG GIFT OR A SMALL GIFT?

## NEWSMARYOSEP

BY RON RUIZ


BOS WALTER, MAG-AAPAT NA TAON NA'KONG NAGTRATRABAHO DITO, HINDI PA RIN NADADAGDAGAN ANG SWELDO KO.
R LUCOT
NAGTITIPID KASI ANG ISTASYON, E.
E SIR, BAKIT SI LOURDES - 6 MONTHS PA LANG, DALAWANG BESES NA NA-PROMOTE?
R LUCOT
ANO BA ANG MERON S'YA NA WALA AKO?
36-24-33?
R LUCOT

# HOROSCOPE

### BY FRANCIS DRAKE

**YOU BORN TODAY:** You are bold and daring! You are also natural in an earthy, genuine way. You live your life without fear or apology. In your drive to be triumphant, you're not afraid to fail. Others admire your mettle. The year ahead is one of exciting beginnings because new paths will open up for you.

**Birthdate of:** Alyssa Milano, actress; Reggie White, football player; Tim Reid, actor.

**ARIES (March 21 to April 19):** You'll soon be asked to contribute your artistic talents to a project connected with design, layout, redecorating or making anything look more attractive. Accept this because you are the artisan of the zodiac.

**TAURUS (April 20 to May 20):** You'll derive much benefit from a pleasurable trip or short vacation now. Try to visit some place you've never been to before. You want to see something new.

**GEMINI (May 21 to June 20):** Organizations or group activities make demands on your time now and in the immediate future. Someone wants your specific input. You will benefit by getting involved with others right now.

**CANCER (June 21 to July 22):** A new love relationship could begin for many of you. If so, it will be intense and certainly memorable. (It's nice to have some juicy diary entries.)

**LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22):** The next few weeks beautifully favor love affairs, relationships with partners and co-workers, and even your relationships with your enemies. Others are willing to cooperate with you now.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22):** This is a good time to talk about difficulties with a partner or close friend. Define what the real duties and obligations of the relationship are so that each party knows what to expect.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22):** Make plans to enjoy movies, the theater, sports or any entertaining diversions. A short vacation will delight you. You need a break!

**SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21):** You have a chance to discover that there is love all around you in your everyday life. Try to acknowledge this. Let others know how much you care for them.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21):** Financial transactions benefit you today. Borrowing money should be easy; investments made now could be advantageous. Shopping for jewelry and beautiful clothes will delight you.

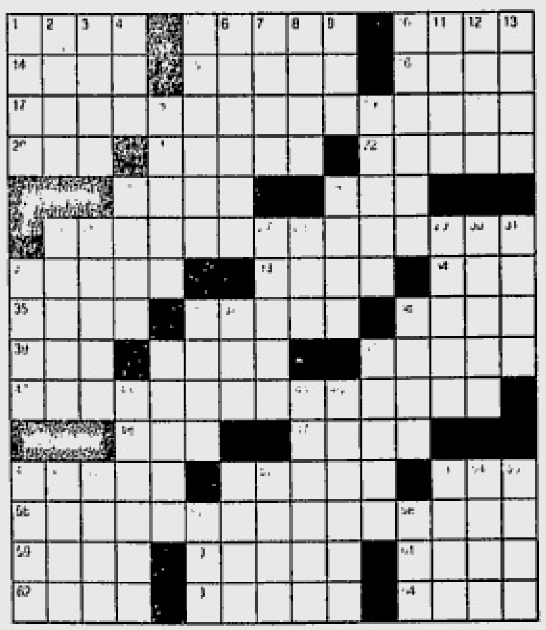
**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19):** This is a good time to make peace with others. Similarly, you might act as a go-between to help others smooth over their difficulties.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18):** Your desire to relate to others is increasing now. You're willing to make personal compromises if necessary. Next month is an excellent time to do this.

**PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20):** Your ability to put the needs of others before your own is strong now. This is one of the more admirable things about your sign: You always want to relieve the suffering of others.

# DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Feudal peon
5 Emergency paper money
10 Paper blocks
14 Old Maid lay down
15 Subarctic forest
16 Double-reed instrument
17 Fully
20 Flag thrower
21 Lively aquatic mammal
22 Sacred poem
23 Silently ill-humored
24 Great Lakes locks
25 Fully
32 Granular
33 Lounge about
34 Sticky stuff
35 Landed
36 Hop dance
38 Kuwaiti or Saudi
39 Spanish article
40 Fiji's capital
41 Canton folk
42 Fully
46 Afore
47 Director Bunuel
48 Video game pioneer
51 Muslim mendicant
53 __-relief
56 Fully
59 Hindu princess
60 Lake by Reno
61 Sound like an ass
62 Bid first
63 Upright
64 Poke fun



By Mel Taub
New York, NY
12/19/03

DOWN
1 Practice punching
2 Facility
3 Repeated rhythmic phrase
4 Monk's title
5 Social position
6 Caribbean leader
7 No longer green
8 Composer Stravinsky
9 __ de deux
10 Lethal stuff
11 Palindromic pop group
12 Barbie or Ken
13 Give the impression
18 Spacious
19 Amiable satire
23 Lummox
24 Stick it out
25 Big-time criminal
26 Pay hike
27 Of an arm bone
28 Escape vehicle
29 Like Hungarian
30 L'chaim or slainte
31 Weepy gasps
32 Bamako's country
36 Enticement
37 Wrigley growth
38 Leaves open-mouthed
40 Calligrapher's stroke
41 Richard's Agnew
43 Rats and cockroaches
44 Town in KY and MD
45 Well-matched
48 Bushy do
49 Sting operation
50 Top-notch
51 Ms. Drescher
52 Tennis stadium honoree
53 Actress Theda
54 Pronto letters
55 Eyelid problem
57 Skater Midori
58 JFK follower

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S | R | A | ■ | N | A | O | M | I | ■ | A | T | B | A | T |
| E | E | L | ■ | C | L | E | N | A | ■ | L | A | R | D | S |
| A | M | A | N | X | F | R | O | M | B | E | L | I | Z | E |
| ■ | ■ | M | A | T | E | ■ | ■ | B | A | S | I | S | ■ | ■ |
| D | U | O | S | ■ | ■ | S | A | U | L | ■ | S | K | I | D |
| A | N | D | A | C | U | T | E | S | I | A | M | E | S | E |
| M | A | E | ■ | A | F | A | R | ■ | ■ | L | A | T | H | E |
| ■ | ■ | ■ | P | R | O | B | A | T | I | O | N | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| T | H | E | R | E | ■ | ■ | T | H | R | O | ■ | P | I | A |
| H | O | P | E | D | T | H | E | I | R | F | L | E | A | S |
| U | S | I | A | ■ | R | I | D | S | ■ | ■ | U | R | N | S |
| ■ | ■ | C | L | A | I | R | ■ | ■ | L | A | S | T | ■ | ■ |
| C | O | U | L | D | B | E | L | V | I | C | T | E | L | S |
| H | E | R | O | D | ■ | R | A | I | S | E | ■ | S | K | I |
| O | D | E | T | S | ■ | S | U | I | T | S | ■ | T | E | D |

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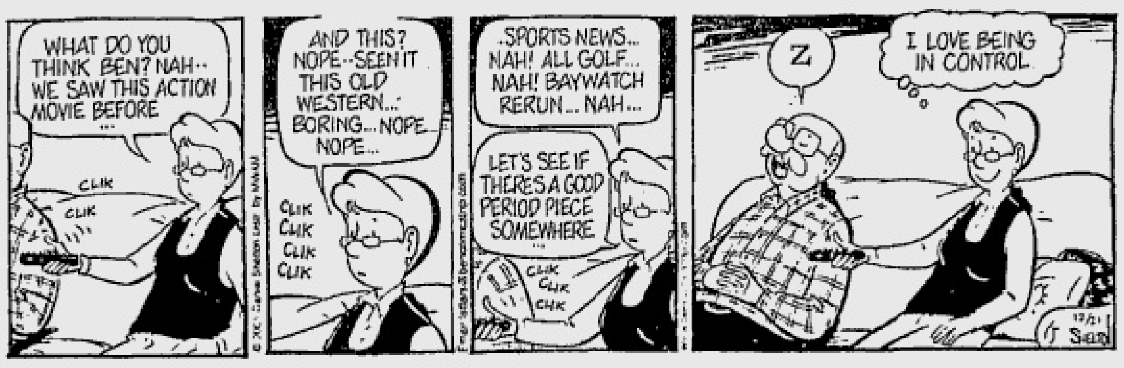
12/19/03

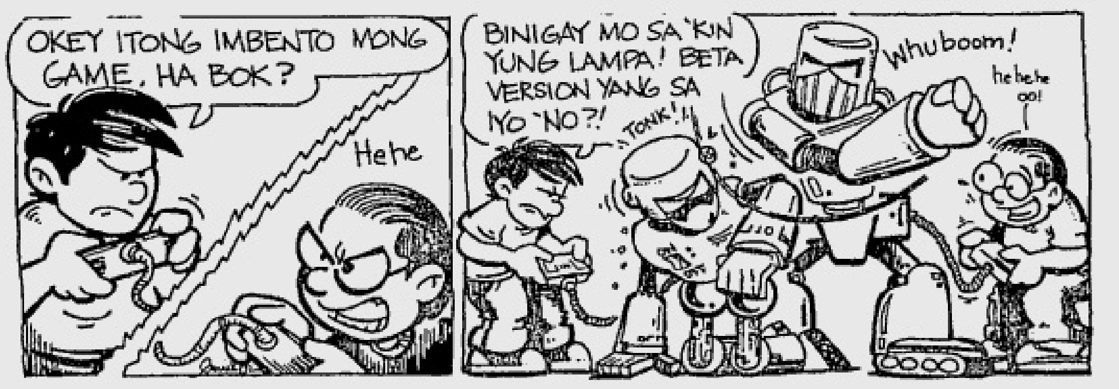
## BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


WHAT DO YOU THINK BEN? NAH.. WE SAW THIS ACTION MOVIE BEFORE ...
CLIK
CLIK
AND THIS? NOPE..SEEN IT THIS OLD WESTERN..: BORING...NOPE... NOPE...
CLIK CLIK CLIK CLIK
.SPORTS NEWS... NAH! ALL GOLF... NAH! BAYWATCH RERUN... NAH...
LET'S SEE IF THERE'S A GOOD PERIOD PIECE SOMEWHERE
CLIK CLIK CHK
Z
I LOVE BEING IN CONTROL
12/21
SHELTON

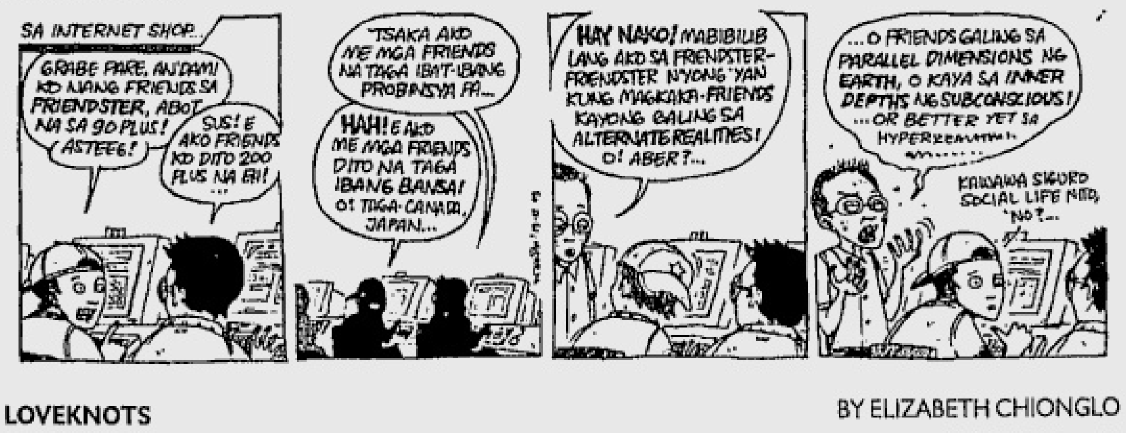
## GENG'S GAMES

BY AMIEL RUFO


OKEY ITONG IMBENTO MONG GAME, HA BOK?
Hehe
BINIGAY MO SA 'KIN YUNG LAMPA! BETA VERSION YANG SA IYO 'NO?!
TONK!
Whuboom!
hehehe oo!

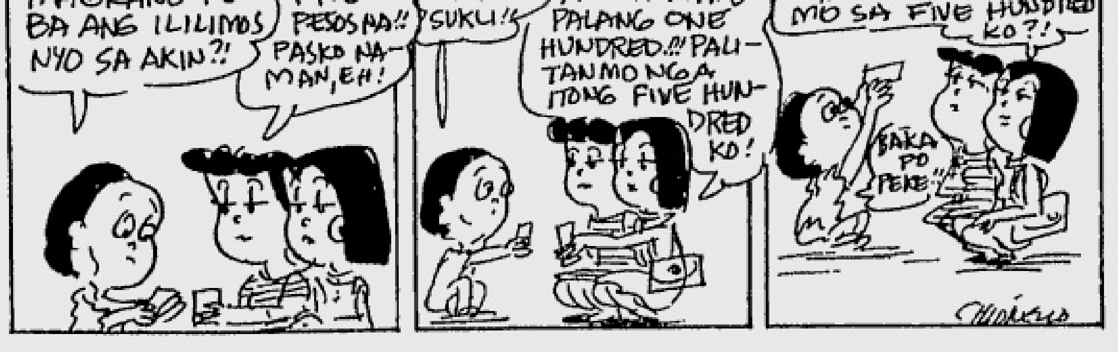
## KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


SA INTERNET SHOP...
GRABE PARE, AN'DAMI KO NANG FRIENDS SA FRIENDSTER, ABOT NA SA 90 PLUS! ASTEEG!
SUS! E AKO FRIENDS KO DITO 200 PLUS NA EH! ...
TSAKA AKO ME MGA FRIENDS NA TAGA IBA'T-IBANG PROBINSYA PA...
HAH! E AKO ME MGA FRIENDS DITO NA TAGA IBANG BANSA! O! TIGA-CANADA, JAPAN...
HAY NAKO! MABIBILIB LANG AKO SA FRIENDSTER-FRIENDSTER NYONG 'YAN KUNG MAGKAKA-FRIENDS KAYONG GALING SA ALTERNATE REALITIES! O! ABER?...
...O FRIENDS GALING SA PARALLEL DIMENSIONS NG EARTH, O KAYA SA INNER DEPTHS NG SUBCONSCIOUS! ...OR BETTER YET SA HYPERKEMAN...
KAWAWA SIGURO SOCIAL LIFE NITO, 'NO?...

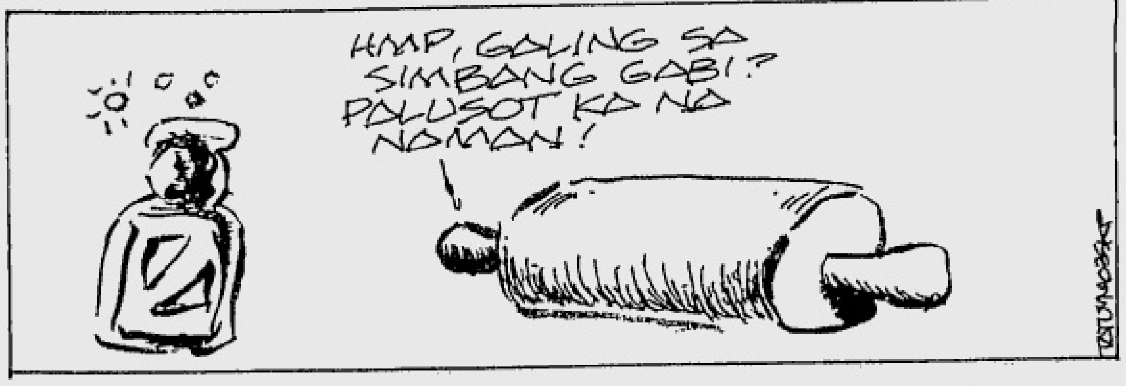
## LOVEKNOTS

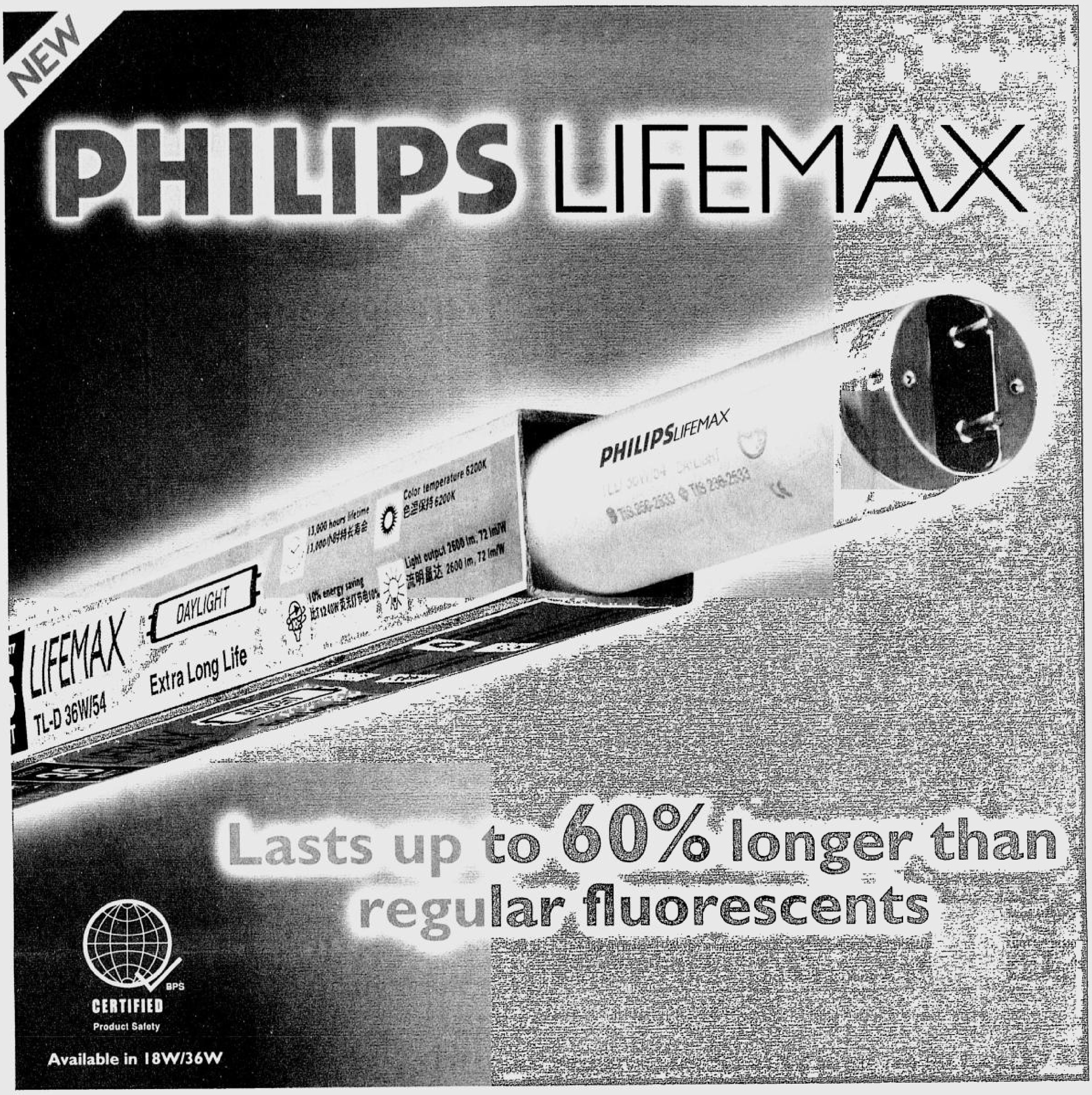
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


MAGKANO PO BA ANG ILILIMOS NYO SA AKIN?!
FIVE PESOS NA!! PASKO NAMAN, EH!
ETO PONG SUKLI!
ANG DAMI MO PALANG ONE HUNDRED!!! PALITAN MO NGA ITONG FIVE HUNDRED KO!
E, ANO'NG SINISILIP MO SA FIVE HUNDRED KO?!
BAKA PO PEKE!

## TULDOK

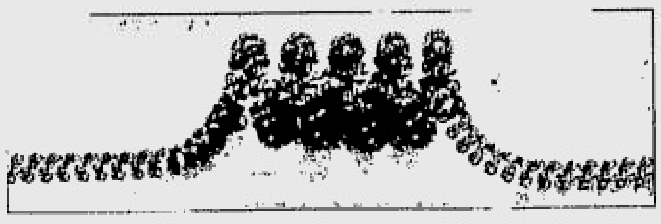
BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


HMP, GALING SA SIMBANG GABI? PALUSOT KA NA NAMAN!
TATUMABRERA

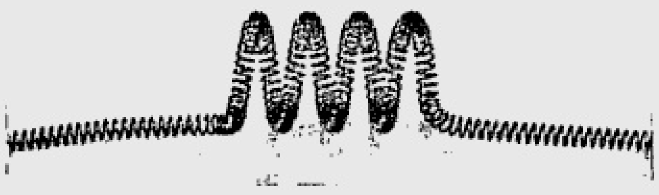

NEW
PHILIPS LIFEMAX
LIFEMAX
DAYLIGHT
Extra Long Life
TL-D 36W/54
13,000 hours lifetime
10% energy saving
Color temperature 6200K
Light output 2600 lm, 72 lm/W
PHILIPS LIFEMAX
Lasts up to 60% longer than regular fluorescents
BPS
CERTIFIED
Product Safety
Available in 18W/36W

**MAXimum LIFE!**

From the makers of fluorescent lights that really last comes **PHILIPS** LIFEMAX. It lasts up to 60% longer than regular fluorescent lamps. Its unique Triple Coil is thicker and more durable compared to coils of other brands making **PHILIPS** LIFEMAX longer lasting than regular fluorescent lights.



Philips Triple Coil



Coil of other brands

**MAXimum SAVINGS! MAXimum LIGHT!**

The next best thing about **PHILIPS** LIFEMAX is the 10% energy savings you get. It's thinner and has lower wattage than regular, thicker fluorescent lights but just as bright.

**MAXimum CONVENIENCE!**

And because **PHILIPS** LIFEMAX has the same length as that of other brands, it can easily be installed on regular fluorescent fixtures at home.

So switch to **PHILIPS** LIFEMAX now for longer fluorescent life, bigger energy savings and a brighter home.

Fluorescent lights that really last!

**PHILIPS**

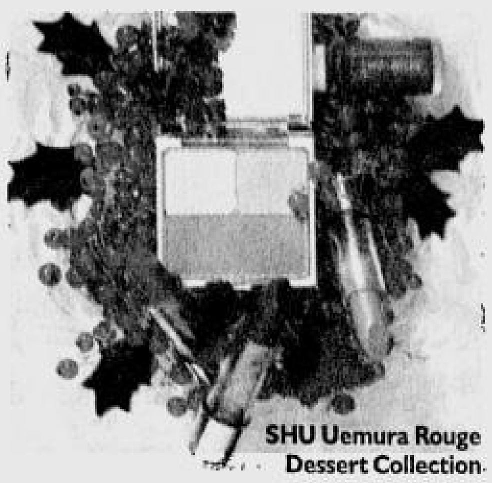
*Let's make things better.*

## Put these two elemental scents together and you've got a great spirit-boosting package

TechnoMarine

DTI.C02
WWW.TECHNOMARINEPH.COM
TECHNOMARINE ENTERPRISES PHILIPPINES INC. TEL. (632) 7573975 TELEFAX (632) 7573976
TECHNOMARINE FLAGSHIP STORE, GROUND FLR. GREENBELT 3 AYALA CENTER MAKATI CITY TEL. 7573975 TELEFAX 7573976
TECHNOMARINE BOUTIQUE, UNIT 311, 3RD FLOOR, BLDG. A SM MEGAMALL, MANDALUYONG CITY TEL. 6317491 TELEFAX 6374943
RAFAEL JEWELLERY 2ND LEVEL, SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL, EDSA COR. SHAW, MANDALUYONG CITY TEL. 6363398 TELEFAX 6363399
RAFAEL JEWELLERY MEZZANINE LEVEL, MAKATI SHANGRI-LA HOTEL, MAKATI CITY TEL. 8138213 TELEFAX 8138501
MY DIAMOND 2ND FLOOR GLORIETTA 4, AYALA CENTER MAKATI CITY TEL. 7571086
TIME PLUS 78 GRND. FLOOR GREENHILLS THEATRE MALL TEL. 7217868
WASHINGTON ROCKWELL R1 LEVEL, POWERPLANT MALL, MAKATI CITY TEL. 8982288

**L'OCCITANE**
**L'Oranger line**
**Pomander**



**SHU Uemura Rouge Dessert Collection**

# Oranges and spices . . .

From page G1

**Neroli perfume** (P2,450). Although these are made from orange blossoms, they have a proven aphrodisiac and sedative effect. The soap's scent lingers in the bathroom as well.

**Woods of Windsor.** This brand's orange spice and cinnamon Wide Awake line is true to its rejuvenating promise. It made a morning person out of normally drowsy me. One whiff of the shower gel, soap or lotion gets me going in the morning and helps me remember all my errands and obligations.

Everything in the bath line, including the essential oil, costs P345 and lasts a long time. That's great value for money. And here's a tip: Use the essential oil or incense if you have a lot of work to do to get that energy boost!

### Makeup goodies

**Bobbi Brown palettes in neutral and deep colors** (P2,800 each). This line contains three eyeshadows, four lipstick shades and brushes set in a sleek tiny box that can fit in any purse.

**MAC palettes in Liza or Holidazzle collection.** Personally, it's the Liza AM or PM eyeshadow collection I prefer, as The Holidazzle isn't for everybody (too sparkly). Included in the Liza collection is the Variety blush, which is coral red with shimmer.

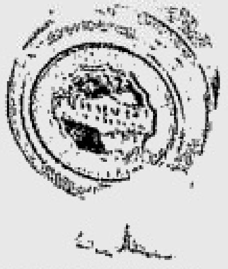
**Shu Uemura Rouge Desserts.** Makeup for the budget-conscious. The Sweet Lip Gloss is the best bargain item on the menu at only P995 a tube. It smells and tastes yummy, and makes lips sexy without leaving you feeling greasy. I love Cherry Red, Rosemary (blue), Lemon, Strawberry and Pear.

There are two makeup palettes: Strawberry Soufflé (for light to medium skin tones) and Chocolate Macaron (for all skin tones), with two eyeshadows and one blush each for P3,250. There are also five limited-edition lipsticks at P1,150 each, with the most neutral shade being the 269-Cranberry Sorbet.

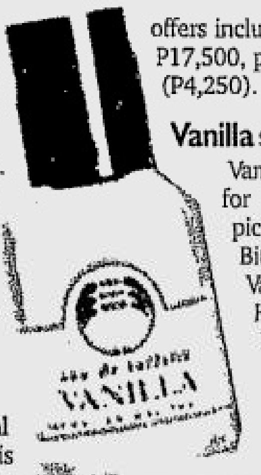
Other Shu Uemura Christmas offers include the roomy red makeup box at P17,500, plus makeup kit A (P4,995) and B (P4,250).

### Vanilla scents

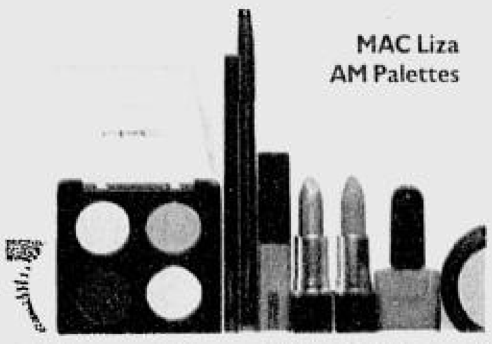
Vanilla scents are sexy and so perfect for colder months. Try these choice picks: Korres Vanilla Cinnamon or Bitter Almond (P645), L'Occitane Vanilla EDT (P1,050 or P1,650) and Honey Water (P1,450), and The Body Shop's Vanilla EDT or perfume oil (both P1,180). Note that Body Shop's special package already includes a full-size vanilla lotion and shower gel.



**L'OCCITANE L'Oranger line solid perfume**



**THE BODY Shop's Vanilla EDT**



**MAC Liza AM Palettes**

Congratulations
to all the winners of
South
SUPERMARKET
FAMILY HOME SHOWCASE
Anniversary Promo

ALABANG
Dining Showcase : Ma. Rita A. Ros - Sucat
Bedroom Showcase : Carmelita Monil - Muntinlupa
Kitchen Showcase : Carmelita M. Landingin - Muntinlupa
Christmas Showcase : Mario A. Tindoy - Muntinlupa
Consolation Prize Winners: Sotero B. Garcia, Danilo C. Macatangay, Peterson A. Fernandez, Jeanette A. Esguerra, Erlinda Hatch, Ma. Linda F. Mendoza, Antonio Molina, Raissa Marie A. Vivo, Josefina O. Salvacion, Jasmin Alterado, Marites Rivera, Rolan D. Labrador, Gerry Albana, Thea Melocoton, Christine M. Dela Cruz, Ma. Luisa Navea, Linda A. Fernandez, Paulet Divinagracia, Arlene Albana, Carmelita Guiao

ESCOLTA
Dining Showcase : Dorothy Sy - Sta. Cruz, Manila
Bedroom Showcase : Luzviminda S. Mercado - Escolta, Manila
Kitchen Showcase : Sarah T. Wong - Ermita, Manila
Christmas Showcase : Kristina Romeroso - Valenzuela City
Consolation Prize Winners: Emelyn Bermejo, Wilfred C. Tiugan, Jonathan Ang, Choa Sau Kit, Carlo T. Jaro, Ma. Rizalina P. Esguerra, William Go, Merla Hondo Jumalon, Jocelyn T. Divina, Yulma O. Catana, Marcelina Shih, Norma Hinayon, Wilberth Abrigado, Marcelino B. Baquiran, Henry B. Layola, Bayani W. Ayes, Elvira M. Tolentino, Ma. Irish Apple Abrigado, Angelina Umali, Merry Go.

GUIGUINTO
Dining Showcase : Jocelyn Yutuc - Balagtas, Bulacan
Bedroom Showcase : Beth Guzman - Guiguinto, Bulacan
Kitchen Showcase : Mary Ann U. Nillas Balagtas, Bulacan
Christmas Showcase : Orlando Bea De Guzman, Jr. - Balagtas, Bulacan
Consolation Prize Winners: Leonarda Macapinlac, Gina G. Rosil, Rogelio D. Sanchez, Lory Baria, Herminda Valeriano, Abigail Grace Ventura, Marivic B. Feliciano, Lydia Matias, Mary Jean Vibal, Renato Morelos, Darwin A. Moralejo, Marilyn T. Bernardo, Cristeta Dazo, Ana Lea R. Santiago, Ellen Cantore, Marvin Samaniego, Maylyn Caraang, Maria C. Quintana, Marissa C. Cruz, Rebecca P. Santos.

LIPA
Dining Showcase : Julian Dimaculangan - Lipa City, Batangas
Bedroom Showcase : Hernani M. Lapid - Lipa City, Batangas
Kitchen Showcase : Lina M. Recto - Lipa City, Batangas
Christmas Showcase : Jasmin H. Lescano - Mataas na Kahoy, Batangas
Consolation Prize Winners: Nancy Racine, Augusto Alday, Lalaine Aquino, Juliet Sto. Tomas, Marilyn Reyes, Aniceta A. Virrey, Joanne T. Cruzada, Oscar Dimaculangan, John Fancubit, Cris Valencia, Joseph H. Magpantay, Lina Marie C. Sabay, Arnel Santoyo, Randolph De Castro, Rustica Mabiling, Leona Guevara, Emma S. Perez, Monic Magpantay, Sonia M. Morcilla, Violeta Ricasas.

LOS BAÑOS
Dining Showcase : Arlene Capistrano - Calauan, Laguna
Bedroom Showcase : Eva R. Inciong - Tagumpay Bay, Laguna
Kitchen Showcase : Hilda Lawas - Los Baños, Laguna
Christmas Showcase : Armando B. Del Valle - Sta. Cruz, Laguna
Consolation Prize Winners: Merly Picones, Juanito Barinan, Julienne Ma. Undine Paz Hutade, Elnora H. Ilocso, Edwin Manzanilla, Helen Magampon, Kathleen Caparas, Marilyn Ibañez, Maida C. Dimarangan, Antonio K. Lo, Nimfa Mamaril, Philip O. Corcuerra, Ferdie Pestoño, Marilou Carandang, Tex Acorda, Ma. Sheryll de Jesus, Eva Hernandez, Deogracias Fodra, Jenilyn M. Alvarez, Gloria A. Atienza.

MALOLOS
Dining Showcase : Janette Z. Santos - Malolos City, Bulacan
Bedroom Showcase : Josephine B. Reyes - Malolos, Bulacan
Kitchen Showcase : Cristina P. Guzman - Malolos City
Christmas Showcase : Irene C. Yanga - Calumpit, Bulacan
Consolation Prize Winners: Ma. Amelia G. Santos, Jocelyn Cruz, Mercy J. Reyes, Romana P. Sempio, Antonio V. De Leon, Cherryl Famero, Rosemarie F. Almoneda, Carmelita S. Razon, Richard Cipriano, Maribel Galang, Cecilia J. De Guizman, Jesus C. Bartolome, Florencio O. Manalaysay, Imelda M Marte, Mariane Salas, Ferdinand Estrella, Conception M. Enriques, Marissa Miyawaki, Edward Dela Cruz, Alma Labao.

PASIG
Dining Showcase : Melissa C. Palma - Santolan, Pasig City
Bedroom Showcase : Ildefonso R. Losloso - Antipolo City
Kitchen Showcase : Rosario Gevero - Antipolo City
Christmas Showcase : Julita R. Valmonte - Pasig City
Consolation Prize Winners: Virginia Gita, Teresita A. Tupaz, Armi C. Mariano, Simeon Lotino, Veronica Inocencio, Josefina T. Yu, Josephine J. Ventigan, Marilyn Reynado, Melissa A. Torre, Nancy R. Aguel, Alma L. Mariñas, Cristeta S. Cruz, Ma. Rita D. Santos, Lourdes M. Parungo, Marilyn Caballero, Martin L. Pacer, Wilberth Abrigado, Mary Jane M. Pascua, Catherine Anne Ibarra, Karla Encontro.

STA. ROSA
Dining Showcase : Ma. Agnes Rotor - Sta. Rosa, Laguna
Bedroom Showcase : Felix Alinsunurin - Sta. Rosa, Laguna
Kitchen Showcase : Arvin O. Esteban - Sta. Rosa, Laguna
Christmas Showcase : Eduardo M. Alcantara - Sta. Rosa, Laguna
Consolation Prize Winners: Romulo A. Alon, Cyd J. Cerrada, Maria Paula Lukban, Severino Cansicio, Ma. Cristina Dy, Marvin Sibayan, Reynaldo Infante, Viciel M. Battuelo, Ellenor R. Padolina, Cesar Ilagan, Camille J. Ardega, Francia C. Nagrampa, Isaac M. Amante, Amie B. Capiña, Diane Beltmonte, Mary Joy Adato, Elizabeth Gomez, Ronaldo J. Martinez, Yolanda A. De Leon, Edelyn Yap.

VALENZUELA
Dining Showcase : Rodolfo T. Miranda - Malinta Valenzuela City
Bedroom Showcase : Evelyn De Guzman - Valenzuela City
Kitchen Showcase : Lourdes Abanto - Karuhatan Valenzuela City
Christmas Showcase : Evangelina R. Sanchez - De Leon Valenzuela City
Consolation Prize Winners: Cirilo Calderon, Emelita Ubera, Riza Rivera, Lolita Mendoza, Rosa Calderon, Esrella A. Lacsao, Gina M. Del Rosario, Mediatrex S. Cruz, Mary Grace Ferdino, Violeta Cruz, Lourdes J. Añonuevo, Anna Mylene Daby, Rajabi Saturnina, Eugenia D. Chou, Felipe M. Deato, Rachelle Ann Jabal, Jessie Fe Ramirez, Elvira L. Maneja, Dlionabelle Ocampo, Eugene Salem.

PER DTI-NCR PERMIT NO. 3013 SERIES OF 2003

RED necklace with matching ring
PHOTOS: CHITO VECINA

# Steel and all

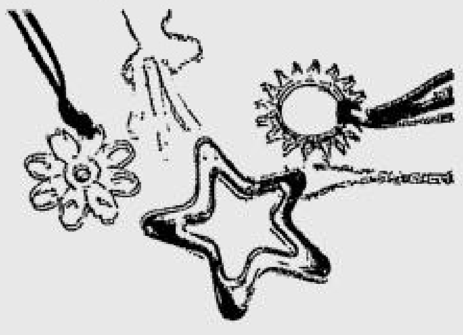
## When Christmas presents come in small boxes, it can only mean one thing—jewelry!

JEWELRY is always a good gift idea, but if you're in the dark as to what type of jewelry to give, go for fine jewelry that is stylish, practical and comfortable for everyday wear.

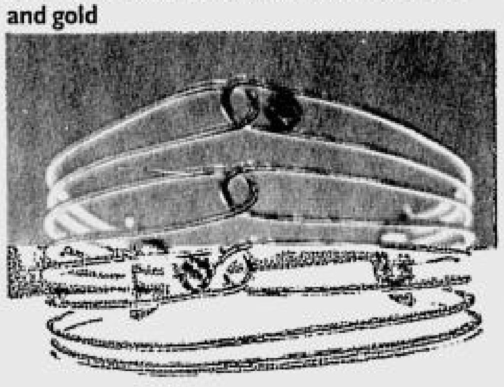
Morellato, an established Italian watch strap manufacturer that has expanded into fine jewelry, is a new line that has been making waves in Europe. Morellato combines stainless steel with gold, diamonds, Swarovski crystals and natural stones to come up with elegant and classy, yet simple and affordable jewelry.

Both collections for men and women feature sensuous designs and inventive combinations of gold and metal, while the unisex collections are funky with playful shapes, charms and changeable colored straps. Morellato jewelry includes necklaces, bracelets, earrings, rings, key chains, cufflinks and money clips.

Previously only available in Italy, France, Germany, Spain, and China, Morellato is now offered in the Philippines exclusively at Rafael's Jewellery in Shangri-La Plaza and Makati Shangri-La Hotel.



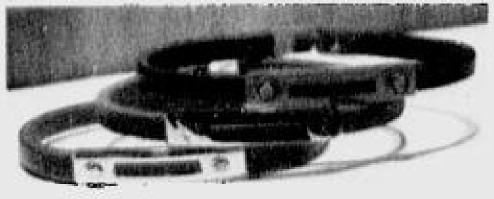
**FUNKIE** collection pendants with diamond and gold



**STAINLESS** steel bracelet with red Swarovski crystals from the Pitre collection

**NECKLACES** with gold cross pendant from the Emotion collection, and stainless steel pendant with sky-blue Swarovski crystals from Magic collection

**FROM** the Dark collection: black leather stainless steel and gold necklace



**BRACELETS** with blue, red and brown straps with diamond

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December 19

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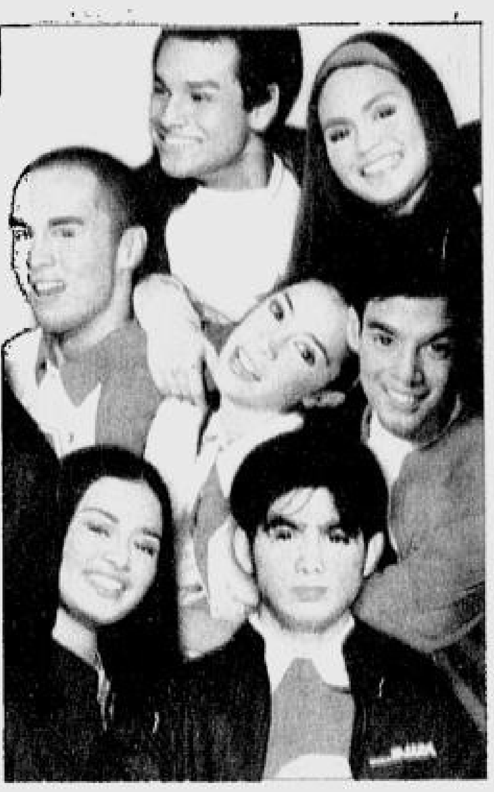

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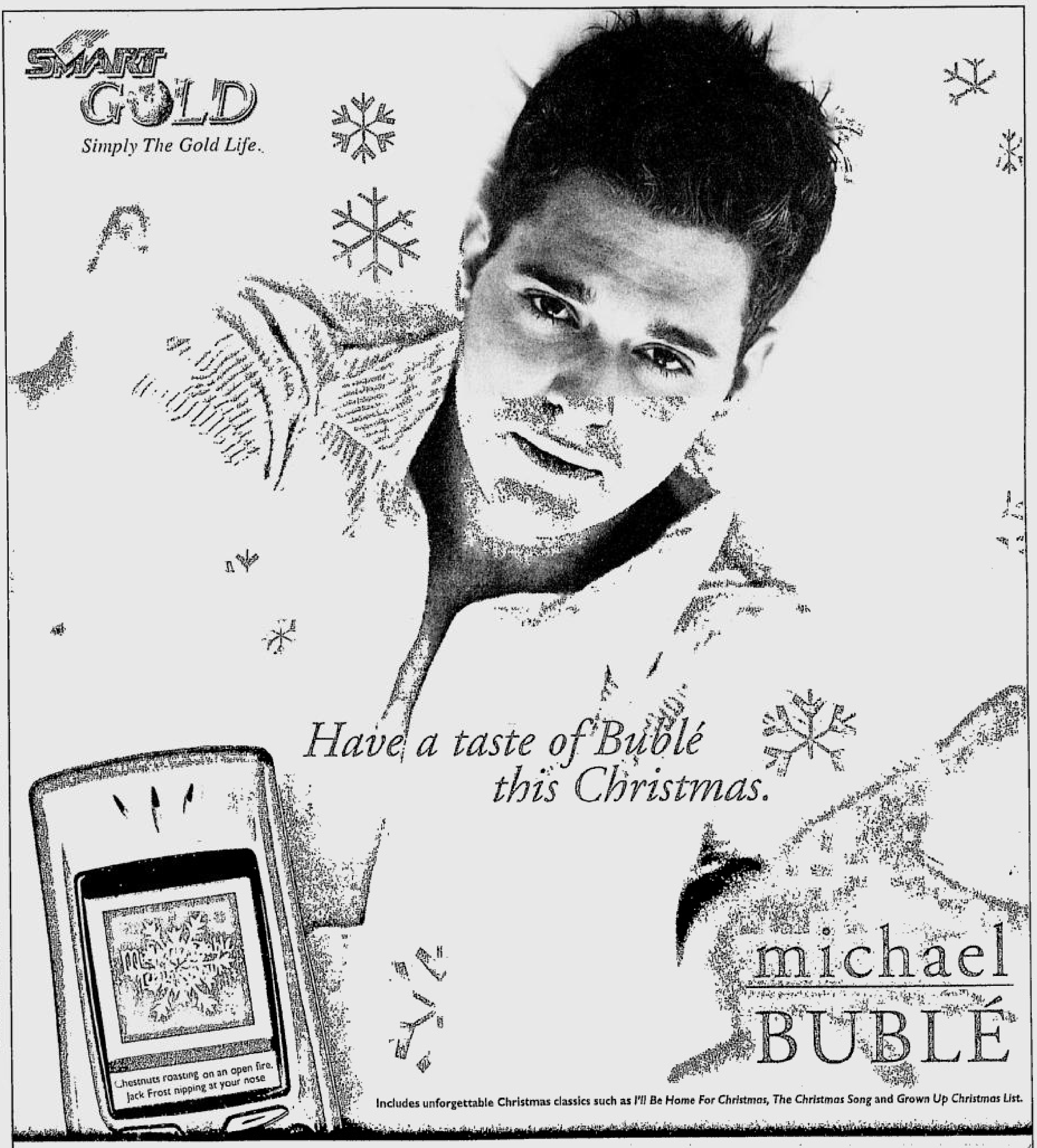
Have a taste of Bublé this Christmas.
michael BUBLÉ
Chestnuts roasting on an open fire, Jack Frost nipping at your nose

Includes unforgettable Christmas classics such as *I'll Be Home For Christmas, The Christmas Song* and *Grown Up Christmas List.*

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|---|---|
| White Christmas | WHITEXMAS |
| I'll Be Home For Christmas | ILLBEHOME |
| Christmas Song | XMASSONG |

AND SEND TO 209.

RINGTONES
Type TONE <keyword> and send to 209.
Type POLY <keyword> and send to 209.

| | |
|---|---|
| Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow! | LETITSNOW |
| White Christmas | WHITEXMAS |
| I'll Be Home For Christmas | HOME4XMAS |
| Grown Up Christmas List | XMASLIST |
| Christmas Song | XMASSONG |

AND SEND TO 209.

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Type LOGO <keyword> and send to 209.
BUBLEL2 BUBLEL4

PICTURE MESSAGES
Type PIC <keyword> and send to 209.
BUBLEP1 BUBLEP2

AND SEND TO 209.

MMS Wallpapers
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MICHAEL1 MICHAEL2
MICHAEL4 MICHAEL6

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Promo period is from November 28 to January 15, 2004.

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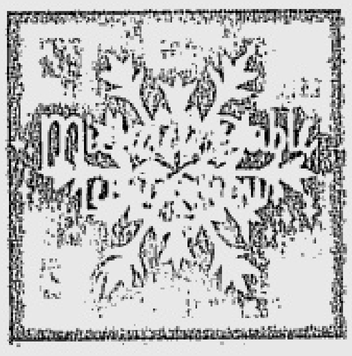
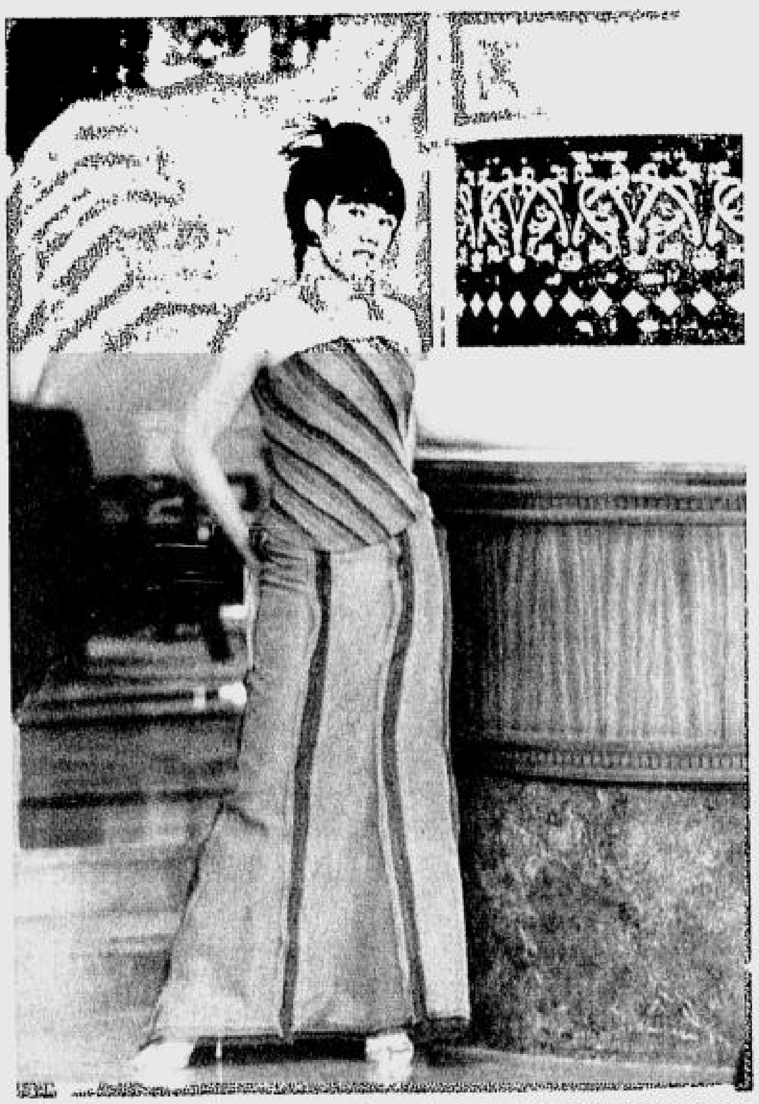
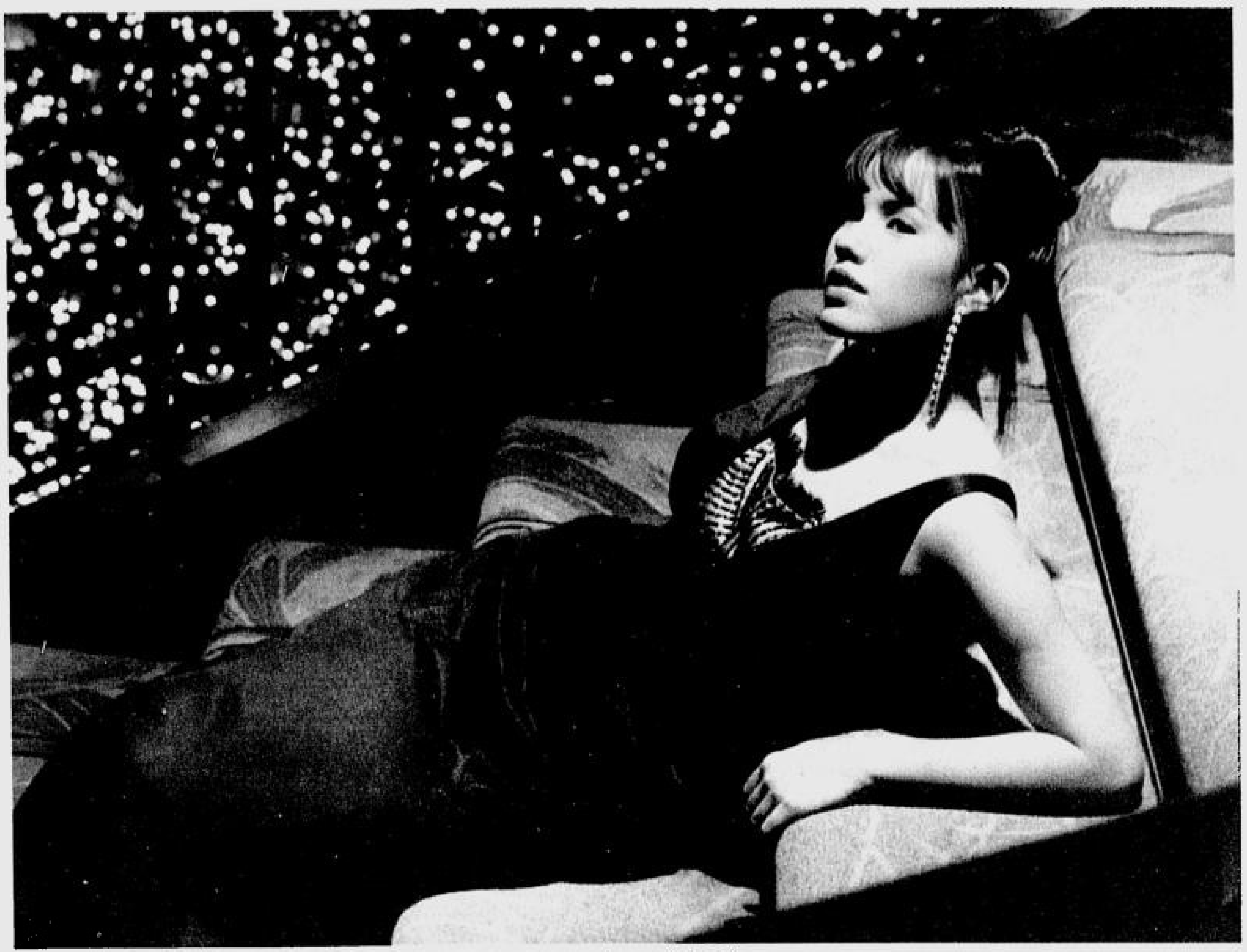




**ERIN** dons a two-piece green and purple ensemble with a fishtail skirt (P15,995).



**BLACK** duchess satin jumper gown with a lace-and-feathers inner tube top (P8,995)

# Vivid colors for the season

**Text by Cheche V. Moral**
**Photos by Chito Vecina**

OUTSHINE the flickering Christmas lights and fizz livelier than the bubbly in festivities these holidays. And do it subtly.

Now's not the time to vie with Santa for everyone's attention, but it pays to look dazzling just the same, so take your cue from the colors of summer pumpkins and carrots, or the tangy shade of intense orange.

Trade that slinky red number for a vivid orange confection to this season's grand evening of merrymaking. For his version, Bobby Novenario layers strips of French organdy for a preview of the brilliant promise of spring.

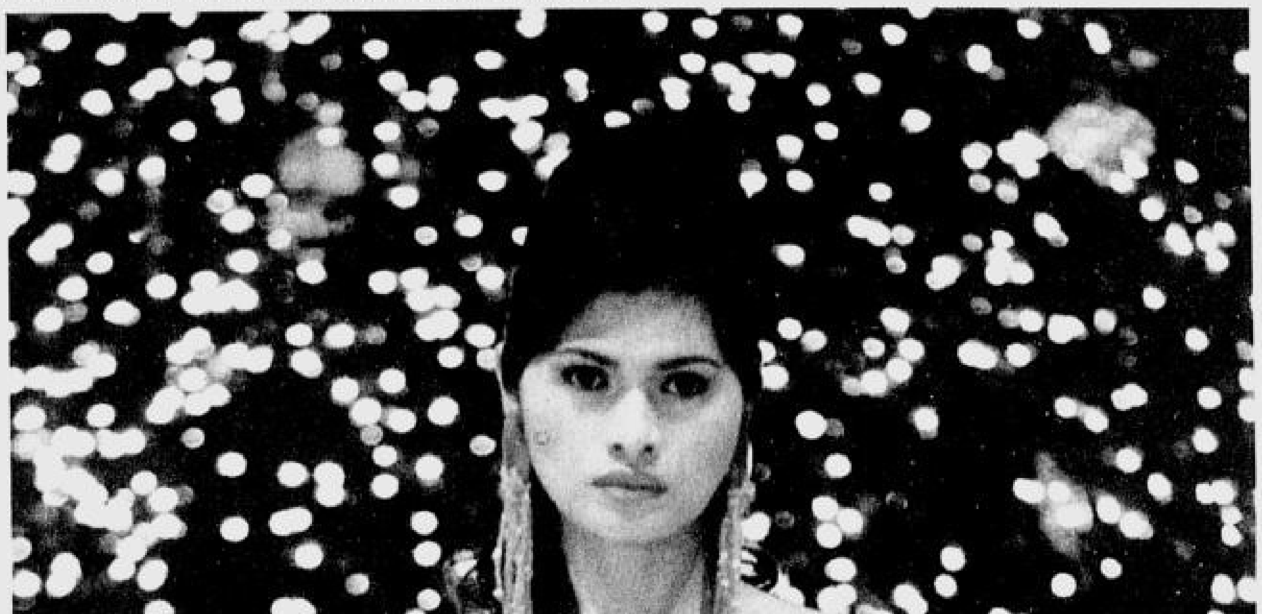
If bright citrus hues are not your thing, go for eggplant purple combined with lush green, and harvest everyone's look of awe.

Or, as the mystery of black never fails in any season, go ahead, dress up and live the drama.

To evoke warmth in the midst of the holiday chill, you can opt for a coffee-colored design with just the right amount of beading for some shimmer. For good measure, Novenario has wraps to go with his creations.

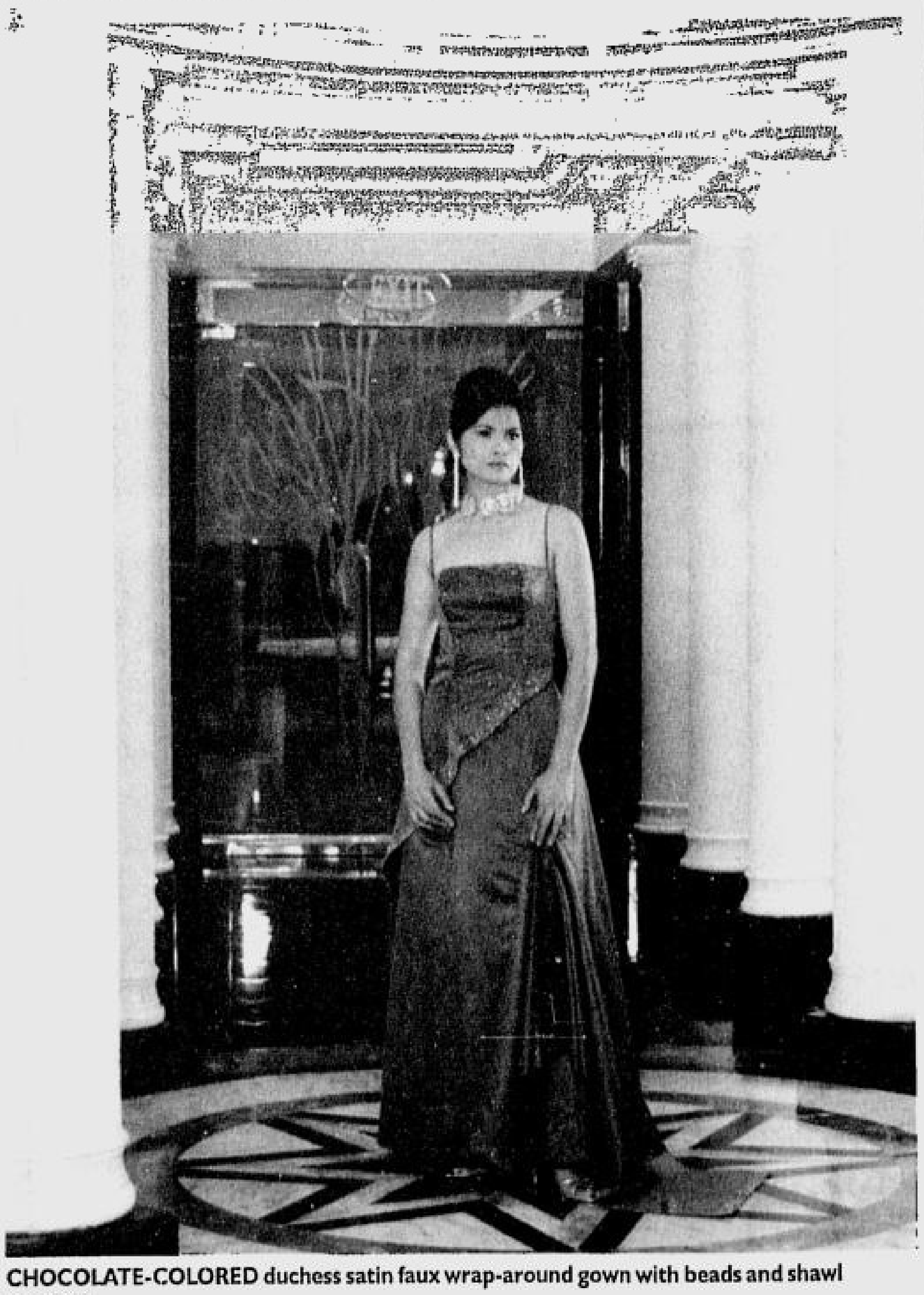
Now, raise your glass and sparkle!

*E-mail the author at cmoral@inquirer.com.ph*



**ERMA** wears a two-piece gown made of layers of orange French organdy cut on the bias (P15,995).

Bobby Novenario designs a shimmering collection for the dressed-up nights ahead



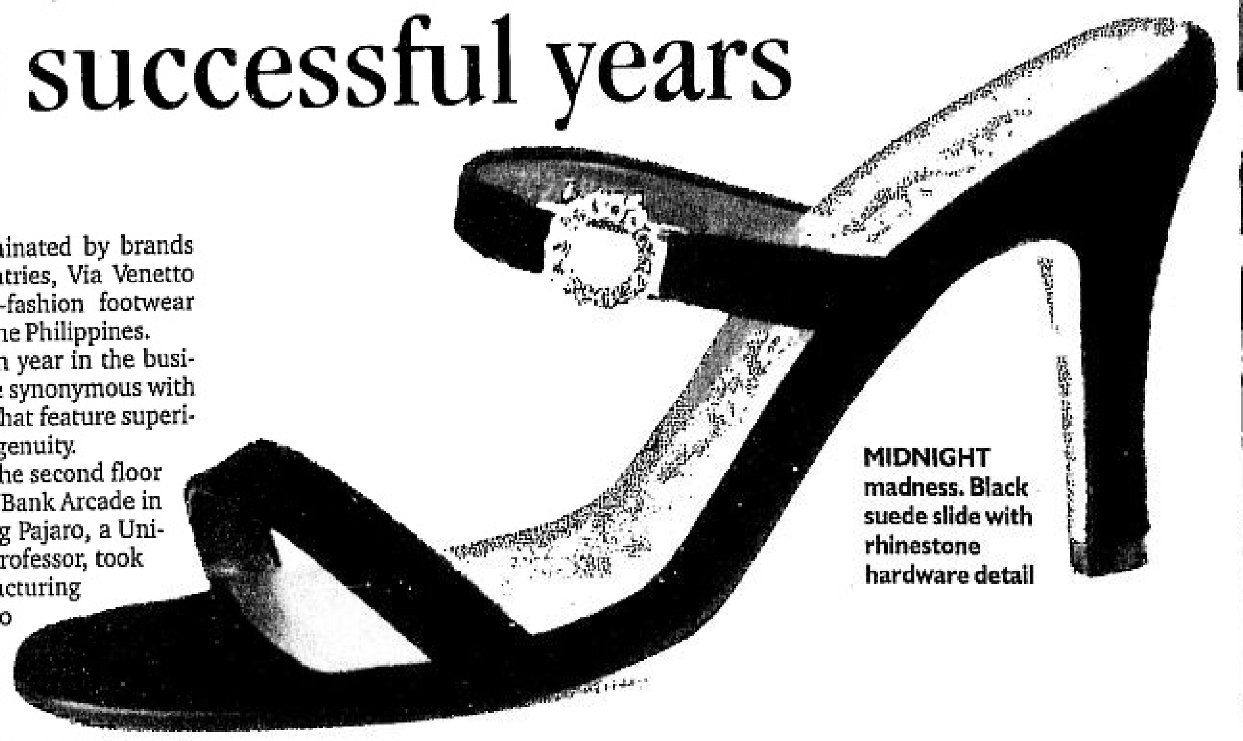
**CHOCOLATE-COLORED** duchess satin faux wrap-around gown with beads and shawl (P8,995)

MODELS: ERMA MAGLALANG AND ERIN CAMPOS
HAIR AND MAKEUP: JUN LA GUARDIA AND RICA LUZARITO OF RJ SALON
SHOT ON LOCATION AT RED, MAKATI SHANGRI-LA
SPECIAL THANKS TO MARC DE LA CRUZ
CLOTHES AVAILABLE AT BOBBY NOVENARIO BOUTIQUES IN GLORIETTA 1 AND SM MEGAMALL A. LOWER-PRICED VERSIONS ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE EPONYMOUS LABEL AT THE SM BOUTIQUE SQUARE

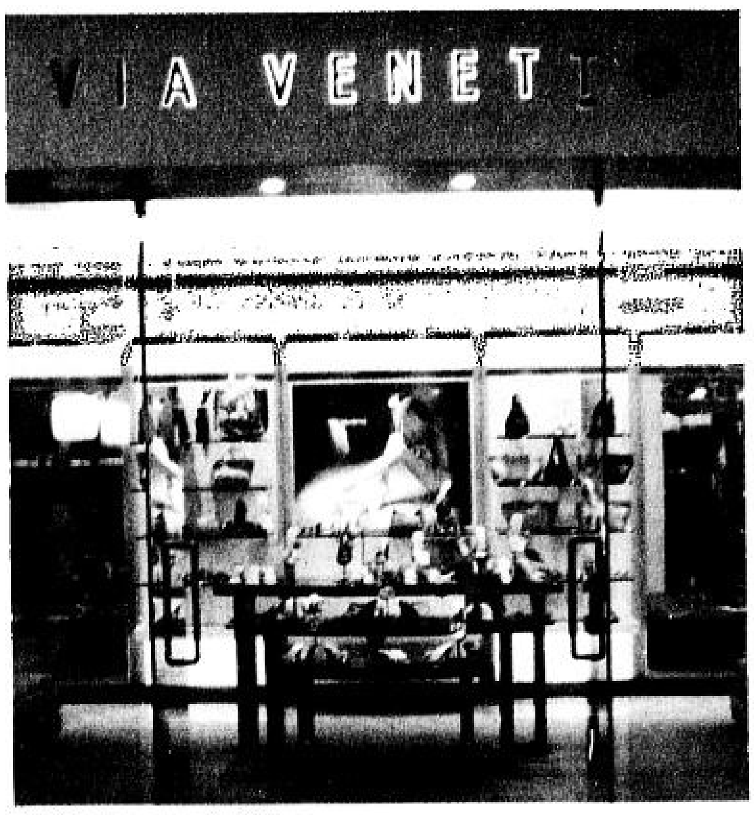
**CAPPUCCINO** georgette gown with shredded lacy bodice and ruffled shawl (P9,995)

**BEADED** georgette asymmetric gown with noodle straps (P7,995)

# Local footwear brand marks 30 successful years



**MIDNIGHT** madness. Black suede slide with rhinestone hardware detail



VIA Venetto store in Alabang

IN AN INDUSTRY dominated by brands from First World countries, Via Venetto has proven that high-fashion footwear could be proudly made in the Philippines.

Now celebrating its 30th year in the business, the brand has become synonymous with stylish and sensible shoes that feature superior quality and masterful ingenuity.

The business began on the second floor of the now defunct Manila Bank Arcade in 1973 Greenhills when Ging Pajaro, a University of the Philippines professor, took the challenge of manufacturing shoes that would appeal to practical urban women, beginning with traditional and classic footwear designs.

"I thought there was safety in sticking with traditional designs, and by being on the second floor on borrowed capital, we needed a return of investment as soon as possible," she says.

"We were, however, not progressing as fast as we needed to or hoped for. We decided to experiment with platform shoes, the newest vogue then, which was so dramatically and drastically different from the traditional sandal-shoe styles. To wear platform shoes, one would have to take more than a giant leap of fashion and a lot of daring. For us, it was a make-or-break gamble," she adds.

The gamble was a hit, and soon Manila's fashion elite began swinging by the store's out-of-the-way location for their trendy footwear needs.

"That insight was really by the grace of God. That one precedent [sealed] our future marketing strategy. We nurtured the impression that if you wanted the newest styles, Via Venetto was the only place to go," explains Pajaro.

Later on, Via Venetto would churn out other trendsetters—metallic mules, printed leather, tooled leather platform wedges, pointed shoes, sky-high stilettos—but always with the company's emphasis on quality.

First ladies, power women, movie stars and stylish housewives came to love Via Venetto, as well as its two sister brands, Francesco and Sundance.

But more than the recognition it now commands, Pajaro says Via Venetto's greatest achievement is the leading role it has taken in nurturing Marikina's footwear industry.

Five pioneer employees were given the opportunity to start their own shoe manufacturing businesses and become Via Venetto partners.

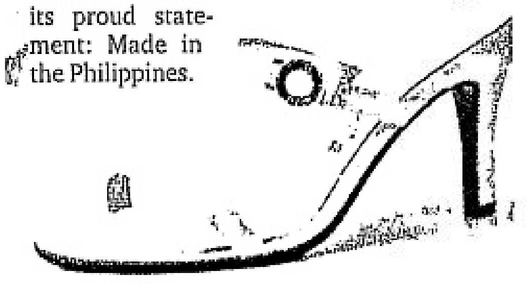
These employees—Nick Astillas, Bong Romeo Santos, Calley Salvador, Bert Gonzales and Ading Pereyra—took on the challenge, and have prospered as well.

"At first, we were afraid that because these former workers were now pretty much left on their own, quality could suffer, and precious leather and materials could be wasted. We could not have been more wrong. Our shoes were never better. They were products of newfound dignity, hope and pride," says Pajaro.

Such a legacy is hard to erase, and Via Venetto is justifiably proud.

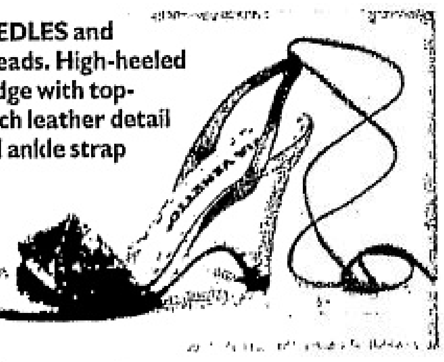
"We believe we have provided the industry with a standard by which excellence can be measured. We have proven that Filipino craftsmanship and creative flair for design, with proper materials and updated equipment, can ably compete not only in the local market but in the global market as well," says Pajaro.

Indeed, Via Venetto is not about to let go of its proud statement: Made in the Philippines.



**LIGHT** blush. Light pink suede slide with rhinestone hardware detail

**SHINY** disco ball. Rhinestone studded silver slides



**NEEDLES** and threads. High-heeled wedge with top-stitch leather detail and ankle strap

Goldilocks
How Thoughtful. How Pinoy.
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Butterscotch Brownies
Fruit Cake
Rocky Road Brownies
Tippy Choco Cake
Assorted Puto with Cuchinta
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Merry Christmas
Sansrival
Goldilocks
Chocolate Decadent Cake with Extra Caramel Sauce

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MANILA'S Five Loveliest: Paula Garcia, Cristal Bagatsing, Rumples Estacio, I. C. Trinidad Tirona and Rona Vergel de Dios

this WEEK @ SM SUPERMALLS
Celebrating Christmas with
MANILA PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA
and Novellino ITALIAN WINES
DEC 20 • 4pm Activity Area SM City CEBU
DEC 21 • 4pm Activity Area SM City ILOILO

# Surprise bash, lovely ladies and a smashing exhibit

## WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

*Maurice Arcache*

Photos by
**Alex Van Hagen**
**on Kodak Max**

HOPING to have a quiet dinner with her children at the chic Cameron Tower of Essensa East Forbes, she instead got the surprise of her life when her kids, with the help of some close famille pals, gave her a super fun night with a surprise birthday bash.

Fashion plate **Naty Pappas**, the widow of the well-loved **George Pappas**, the Greek shipping magnate and founder of Arphaphil Shipping Corporation, was all smiles and thrilled over the party organized by her children—**Christina, George, Nerissa** and **Margarita.**

The party, *palanggas*, was graced by longtime pals and business partners, such as Capt. **Eleftherio Belexis**, who jetted in with his wife **Anna** all the way from Athens, Greece; and the celebrator's close pal, the luminous **Baby Arenas**, who came in a yellow pantsuit and honored the celebrator with two heart-touching ballads, "Kahit' Na" and "An Affair To Remember."

Also toasting Naty were her Embassy-row gang: Chilean Ambassador **Carmen Lynam**; British Ambassador **Paul Dimond** with his wife **Carolyn**; Libyan Ambassador **Salem Madam**; Mexican Ambassador **Enrique Hubbard** with his wife **Mariana**; Portuguese Ambassador **Joao Caetano da Silva**; Sri Lanka Ambassador **Arlya Shanta Rekawa** with his wife **Elsie**; and Syrian Consul **Issam El Delis.**

A superb dinner was prepared by Naty's favorite caterer, Via Mare, which knew perfectly well some of the celebrator's favorite dishes, including the aperitif, watercress and shiitake mushrooms in parmesan tacos with balsamic vinaigrette dip.

The aperitif was followed by a refreshing potato-leek soup in squash shell. The main course was a duette of roast beef with creamy mustard sauce and sea bass with champagne sauce, accompanied by angel's hair pasta with Portobello mushrooms and sun-dried tomatoes in extra virgin olive oil.

Dessert was everyone's favorite Via Mare concoction, the festive Mango Jubilee. All of the food was drowned with must-have French wines.

Included in the more than 50 guests were Naty's old gang—**Al** and **Nena Casimiro**; vivacious **Nelly Bengzon**; **Letty Hahn, Cora Espiritu, Chit Gohu**; lawyer **Manuel Lazaro** with wife **Rose**; and Dr. **Robert Cullen** with wife **Luz**—who made the celebration even more memorable, *palanggas*.

It definitely was one night when Naty's famille and special friends were all around to share her blessings. The party, enlivened by chamber orchestra music, was truly an affair to remember, *palanggas.*

### Loveliest

Manila's Five Loveliest was elegantly staged by the hip watch of the chic pack, Technomarine, and the Love 14 Foundation, at the Rizal Grand Ballroom of busy-busy Makati Shangri-La Hotel recently.

The opening number featured the event's mega producer-director, Richard Tann, singing the hot Latin song "Brazil" and the romantic "Moonlight Serenade" with no less than the five girls wearing fashion by **Rajo Laurel.**

The girls made a second parade wearing stunning formal evening gowns by the chi-chi

SURPRISE/ 14

Christina Aguilera
FoneStarz
Hey there! Hope you have a rockin' Christmas and a funky New Year!
Ben Affleck
FoneStarz
Beyonce Knowles
FoneStarz
Have a hip-hoppin' Christmas, my friend!
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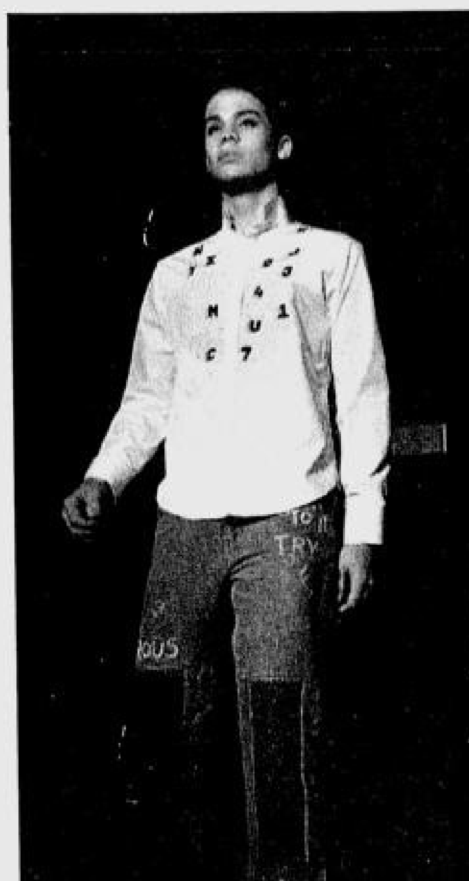


**NUMBERS** and letters either printed or embroidered

**LADYLIKE** with a twist

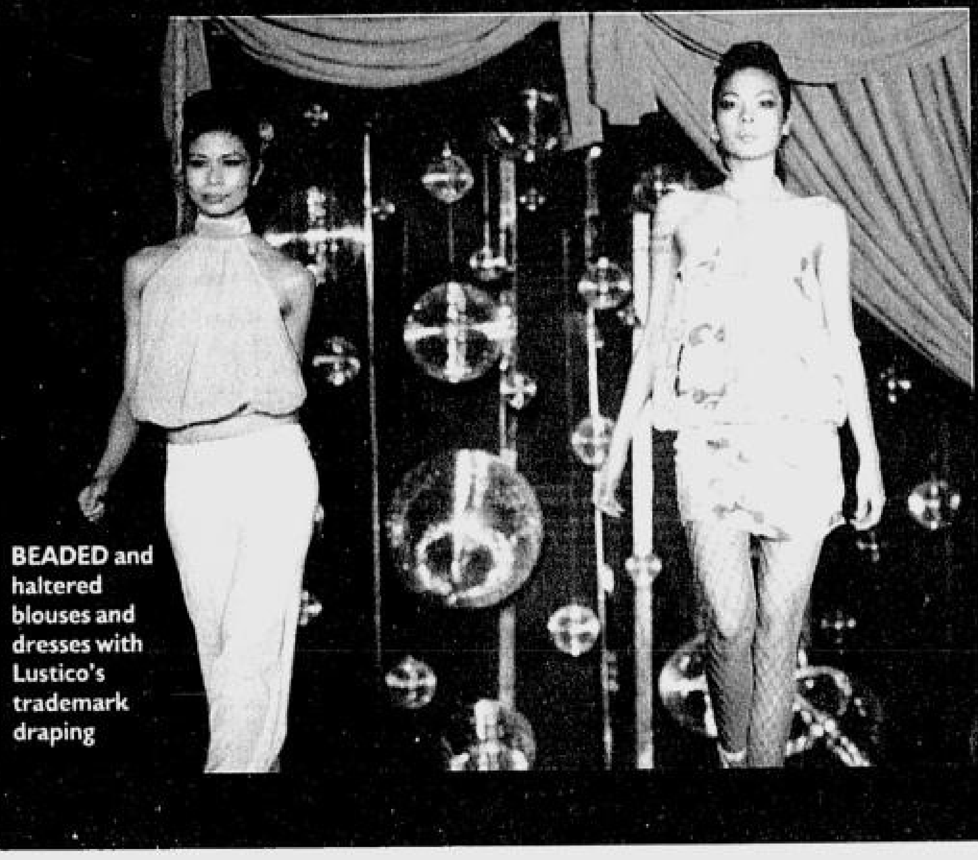
**COMBINATION** of fabrics and beadwork in one shirt

**BELTED** jacket with rivets

**TUXEDO** shirt for her

# Night wear on party street

**TOPSTITCHI** on the should and an intere placket



**BEADED** and haltered blouses and dresses with Lustico's trademark draping

Dennis Lustico launches his latest and more exclusive RTW line for Rustan's called U Night

**Text by Alex Y. Vergara**
**Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan**

IF it ain't broke, don't fix it.

Dennis Lustico obviously kept this mantra in mind when he launched his latest RTW line for Rustan's called U Night, which, like its forerunner U, offers hip, edgy but wearable party clothes for men and women.

Unlike U, however, U Night is more "exclusive," as production is limited. There will be no reissues. Lustico promises to limit to 12 pieces the number of a particular style. As such, prices of clothes under the U Night label are higher by P1,000 to P2,000 compared to those under the U line.

"Some of the materials are imported," he says, "but every piece is proudly Philippine-made. Because of the limited volume, manufacturers abroad, especially in China, aren't keen on accepting job orders."

At the same time, the fashion designer has put more emphasis on details—patching, beading, layering, draping, topstitching, embroidery, fraying and printing—to come up with shirts, pants, jackets, skirts, dresses a blouses that are either crisp or supple.

U Night, which is exclusively availabl Rustan's Makati, is probably the closest thi to made-to-order clothes.

Lustico's haltered and beaded blousons, instance, come with his trademark drapi His versatility as a designer shows in his c lection of slim-fitted men's shirts and jack with such elements as rivets on the pock French cuffs on the sleeves and tucks on back.

"I have nothing against mass productio he says. "Some people, however, are tired being seen in the same clothes as the next p son. They want to look more original. This my response to such a need."

Fans of U need not worry. The brand v still be around to cater to the market's mand for more casual yet stylish daywear.

But they now have a better (albeit more pensive) alternative if they want to mal grand entrance or simply get noticed.

*E-mail the author at avergara@inq er.com.ph*

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# Working women's favorite

CRISTINA Garcia embodies the Calypso look—stylish, classic and very feminine.

She can wear something casual, a clingy romantic blouse and classic slacks or flirty top and dressy pants.

Calypso, a favorite of working women, has expanded its styles and has become a brand even for young ones and fashionistas.

The styles are versatile enough to be easily mixed and matched. One can quickly go from practical and efficient to sophisticated. Stylist Rosario Herrera said a woman only needed to change her accessories for a different look.

For the holiday season, hot combinations are black and white, red and white, and pink, old rose and white.

Calypso line is available in all department stores nationwide.

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UFFLES and halter make
r a striking combination.

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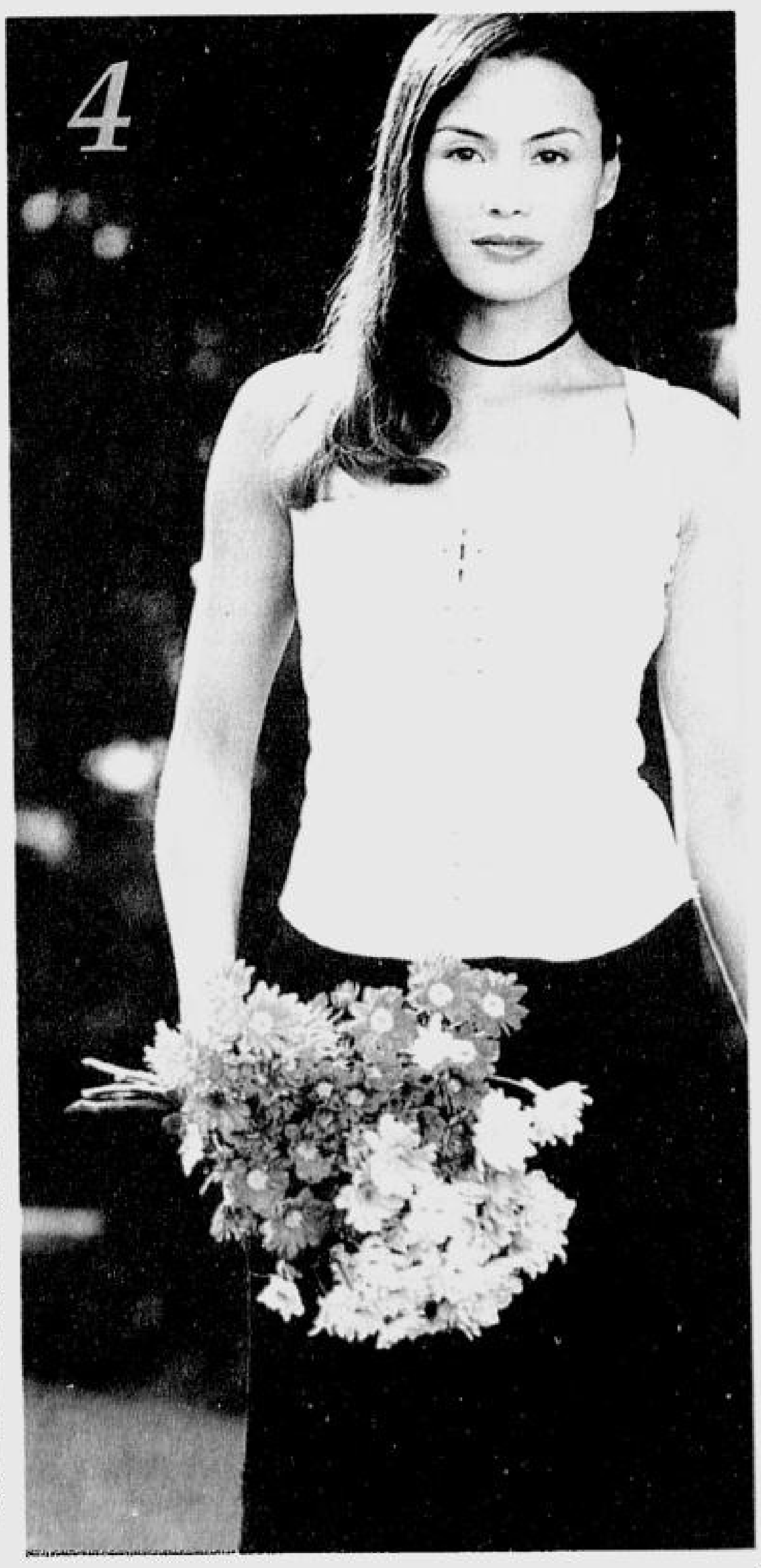
RUCHING
on the sleeves



4

*1* **BLACK-AND-WHITE** striped corset top paired with white stretch pants

*2* **SOFT** pink cowl neck top with sequins and white stretch pants

*3* **BLACK-AND-WHITE** striped top with ruffled neckline and white pencil skirt

*4* **WHITE** lace-up top with black knee-length skirt

PHOTOS: WIG TYSMANS
STYLING: ROSARIO HERRERA
MODEL: CRISTINA GARCIA
MAKEUP: JUAN SARTE III
PICTORIAL DIRECTION:
ERIC PEBENITO

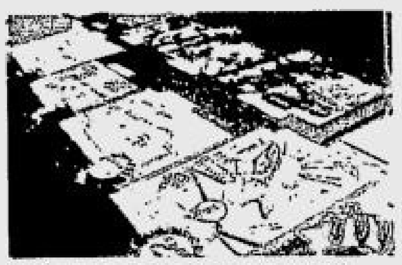
# Green Cross Alcohol is poster-perfect!

A very successful and fun-filled poster-making contest culminated a year of activities for Green Cross Alcohol. Organized in cooperation with Saranggola magazine, it was held from July to December gathering more than a thousand creative artworks from all over Mega Manila, showcasing the amazing talent of schoolchildren.

Exciting and fun as it was, the recent event turned out to be more than what was expected… even intended! That while its real purpose was to educate kids about protection against germs, they seemed to have taught the contest organizers so much more.

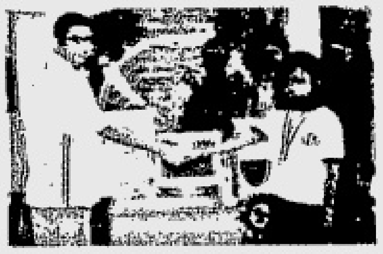
With a theme of having Green Cross Alcohol as "baon protection against germs", it was surprising to learn that even kindergarten students already knew the importance of environmental cleanliness and personal hygiene. Most of the posters highlighted the different uses of alcohol and how it becomes a necessity in their daily lives, whether in school or at home. Several even drew Green Cross Alcohol as a larger-than-life character, who has become their 'hero' or 'guardian' against 'enemies' like germs and diseases. And some referred to Green Cross as their 'best friend', one who will never let anything harm them.

Choosing the best turned out to be a difficult task as judges had to choose the top 3 from 60 finalists. Grand prize went to a Grade 6 student who received one brand new computer for herself and another for her school. Second and third prize winners were awarded P10,000.00 and P5,000.00 worth of gift certificates, respectively.



60 finalists chosen from a thousand entries

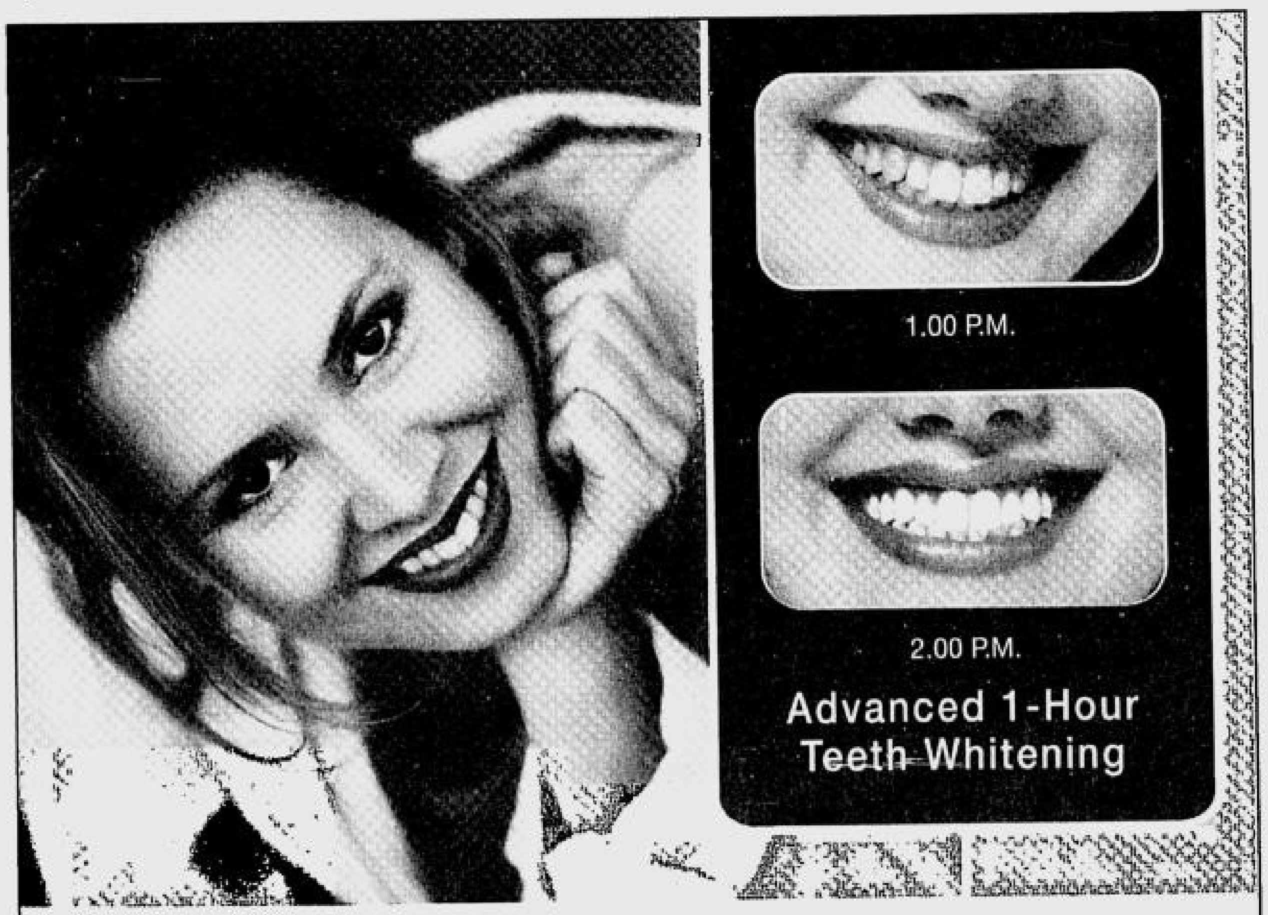
Judges doing their rounds



Grand prize winner Karole Dayne M. Abuan of Cachapero Learning School, Cavite with Green Cross Group Product Manager Rusty Rastrullo

2nd prize winner Daren Kaye Aquino of Philippine San Bin School

3rd prize winner Robina Lacuna of Manila Central University, Caloocan with Rusty Rastrullo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**THE HARDWORKING** officers of Love 14 Foundation: trustees Mario Katigbak and Bearnice Go; VP Therese Santos; chair Nini R. Licaros; trustees Helen Ong and Naty Pappas; president Irene M. Francisco; trustee Becky Garcia; and treasurer Mel Meer

**MONS** Romulo Tantoco at the recent launching of her book "Baro," which will be available at leading book stores next week; shown with her are publisher Gina de Venecia, President Macapagal-Arroyo and Marikina Mayor Marides Fernando.

# Surprise bash, lovely ladies . . .

From page I1

Escada, to the soulful voices of 17:28.

The third parade, *palanggas*, was definitely the highlight of the evening. Together with handsome escorts, the babes showed off their dancing skills in an exciting, fun number called "Rigodon de Honor, ala Hip-Hop," which swept the crowd off their Blahnik- and Gucci-encased feet, dahlings.

The super-interesting seven-minute AVP clip emphasized that Manila's Five Loveliest is not just a selection of beauty and brains, but also of personality, character and good breeding. It documented these young girls in their honest and purest state, which definitely showed their inner beauty.

It also allowed the audience to realize how young 21st century Filipinas think and react to issues and situations today. It showed that the generation today, even if they may sometimes appear reckless and naive, are really very responsible and aware of everything around them.

And lucky for these young misses, they are all blessed with good education and upbringing, sociocivic awareness and good values.

Take your well deserved bow, girls: **Cristal Bagatsing, Rona Vergel de Dios, I.C. Trinidad Tirona, Rumples Estacio** and **Paula Garcia**!

**NATY** Pappas with her beloved children—George, Cristina and Margarita Cereso

**NATY'S GANG.** (from left) Alfred Hahn, Nena Casimiro, Luz Cullen, Dr. Robert Cullen and Al Casimiro

## Design young turks

After months of real hard work, which involved conceptualizing and constructing their designs, the Philippine School of Interior Design Advanced Class '03 finally celebrated their night of nights, *palanggas*, with the opening of their graduation exhibit at the PBCom Tower on Ayala Avenue.

PSID is manned by name-dropables in the design industry such as administrator **Charo Cancio Yujuico**; co-founder and director **Edith Oliveros**; and dean of students **Jie Pambid**. It has a respected faculty. Over the years, PSID has proudly produced some of the best interior designers in the country, and its graduation exhibits have served as the launch pad for talented industry neophytes.

Showcasing 33 beautiful booths, the exhibit is dubbed "Isla," as in "Interior Spaces Local Application," a theme inspired by 2003 being the Philippine Tourism Year. The exhibit therefore incorporated the cultures, traditions, indigenous materials, flavors and colors of the different regions of the country in its designs.

It was mounted in cooperation with the Department of Tourism and the Metropolitan Museum of Manila.

The guests who marveled at the works of the students included such hot names as Olongapo City's vibrant Mayor **Kate Gordon** (representing her hubby, Tourism Secretary **Richard Gordon**), architect **Bobby Mañosa**, Metropolitan Museum director **Ino Manalo** and publisher **Opat Hermano**.

Guests from show biz included gorgeous **Carmi Martin**, who is one of the graduating students; bosom buddies **Tessie Tomas** and vavavoom **Vernie Varga**, who performed two songs; Caloocan Mayor **Rey Malonzo**; and good-looking **Hans Montenegro** and his big love, beautiful **Maritoni Fernandez**.

Scouting around for new design ideas were other guests such as Baby Arenas, **Ado Escudero, Tito** and **Patis Tesoro**, stylish **Baby Fernando**, headturner **Eva Abesamis, Henry** and **Jojo Zabarte, Josine Elizalde, Becky Garcia, Mary Ann Ojeda Lumen**; and designer **Gerry Katigbak**.

Big business names gave full support to the exhibit such as the Ching famille, dahlings, of Shell Canvass, furniture maker **Buddy Lagdameo, James Ung** of Boysen, **Chris Cheng** and his parents of Kitani, **Michelle Manzo** of Orophil Stonecraft, Sobo's **Vincent Eric Yap**, Filinvest Asia Corporation execs **Leyo De Guzman** and **Jun Gonzalez**, dean **Carmelita Lazatin** of the College of St. Benilde, and others.

*Naturellement*, at the end of the day, who would be more excited than the students themselves? As early as now, they have received job offers and clients. Not bad at all, *palanggas*.

Class '03 president **John Unson** and the hardworking PSID faculty were in bliss over the success of the exhibit. Unson shares the huge success of the show with the other class officers: Carmi Martin, **Aizza Gonzalez, Jennifer Newfield, Sheng Rosagazo , Chem Uy and Lindy Kaw**, as well as with the tireless PR committee led by **Monica Roca, Cholo Arucan, Techie Leonio, Acie Bonifacio, Paolo Sayo** and **Lita Pabst**.

Once the congratulations were over, I asked one of the graduates, "Well, now your dream has finally come true."

"You bet," she answered, "the only way it came true, Maurice, was to stay awake and work real-hard at it."

Amen, babe.

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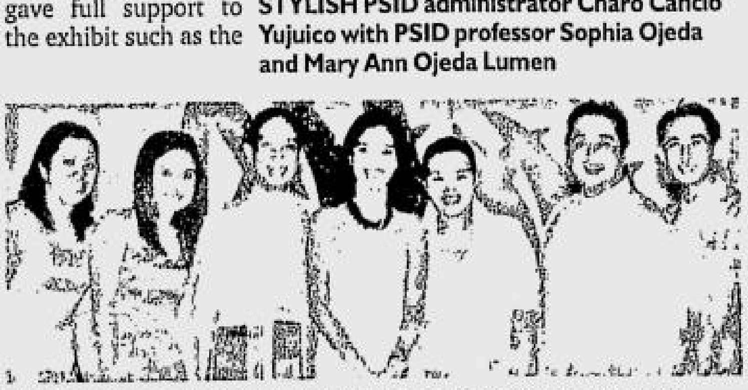
Hey, that must-have coffee-table book, "Baro Philippine Fabric and Fashion," beautifully edited by that multifaceted young lady of substance, **Mons Romulo Tantoco**, will be ready next week at National Book Store and Mag:net newsstand, and the Metropolitan Museum of Manila. It is a great must-have book; it's a must-give gift for the holidays.

Check it out, *palanggas*.

**STYLISH PSID** administrator Charo Cancio Yujuico with PSID professor Sophia Ojeda and Mary Ann Ojeda Lumen



PSID Bukidnon group members Sheila Perez, Cesz Sanchez, Tin Carvajal, Jammy Roxas, Richard Bernardo with professors Leo Almeria (third from left) and architect Ed Gustilo (second from right)

**AT THE PSID** graduation exhibit: Tito and Patis Tesoro, Carmi Martin and Olongapo City Mayor Kate Gordon